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8:00 CENTRAL TIME



HERE'S A FREE IDEA FOR the VCR manufacturers. The various clock/timers are only as good as the power supply that keeps them going. In the event of a power black-out, blown fuse or inadvertent unplugging the VCR owner has to "reprogram" the machine. This can be a time-consuming affair, particularly if you have to set four or five shows over a two week period. If you are out of town and your home experiences a momentary power outage, you can forget about all those television shows you wanted to watch.

The idea is this: add a nine-volt battery input to the back of the VCR. Then, in the event of power outage the battery would immediately kick-in and "save" the clock, timer and programming. Said battery would have to be replaced every six months or so.

While on the subject of VCRs, I would like to offer another suggestion to the manufacturers. Quit eliminating recording speeds. You are getting the older VCR owners angry, and you are confusing new buyers.

Five years ago, Sony came out with its first VCR—a model that recorded at a speed they called "X-1." The basic blank cassette—the L-500—ran for about an hour at that speed. A couple years later, RCA, JVC, Panasonic and a horde of others came out with the incompatible VHS system, and offered videofreaks two hours of recording time at its fastest speed and four hours at its slowest. In retaliation, Sony offered two speed machines that gave the owner the option of two hours on that L-500 tape.

Competition being what it is, Sony and the Beta people eventually developed a machine that recorded at an even slower speed—X-3—that stretched the L-500 tape to three hours. They also came up with a thinner, longer tape.

The problem was, the Beta X-3 machines could not record at X-1—only at the X-2 and X-3 speeds. It could playback those X-1 tapes, but if

there was a television show or movie you really, really liked and wanted at the X-1 speed (with its decidedly superior picture), you were out of luck if you had a newer machine.

Beta lost one important advantage to VHS—the X-1 record speed resulted in a picture superior to that of the VHS "SP" (fastest) speed. The X-2 picture was not quite as good.

Now that there is a blank tape that will allow a Beta owner to record up to five hours at the X-3 speed, the VHS manufacturers lost their edge—temporarily. They, too, offered a third, slower-still speed (SLP or EP), and stretched the length of a basic cassette to six hours (a promised thinner tape cassette would give VHS owners the option of recording seven and one-half or even nine hours on one tape).

Let me digress for a moment and offer an aesthetic analysis: the slower the speed, the poorer the picture quality. In other words, the picture quality on both the VHS and Beta units at their respective slowest speeds is pretty poor, and only useful to people with programmables who plan on being out of town for a period of time.

O.K. So the new Beta owner is screwed out of the X-1 speed.

Now it appears the uncautious VHS owner might get screwed out of the middle, LP (four hour) speed. Whereas almost all new models record at two, four or six hours, some—just a few—have dropped the four hour. The LP speed is useful—the picture quality is acceptable and there is little one can put on a six hour speed that one cannot at four.

This planned obsolescence bit is making some VCR owners scared. If somebody develops a slower-still, ten hour speed for either format, you can imagine what the manufacturers might do.

Caveat emptor, VCR buyers.

—Mike Gold,
Editor

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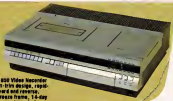
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re:ACTION

WHY DID ROCKFORD DIE?

Before you take Mike Gold's *Futurespeak* seriously, read Keith Laumer's *The Wall* and *Cocoon*. They present 40-year-old predictions to contemplate.

What bothered me most was the misleading cover copy used to entice the buyer. "What killed one of the best..." and "Much more," and so on. Not once did Steve Mitchell ask why *The Rockford Files* went off the air. For once it wasn't the action of some purile exec, but James Garner bowing out due to ill health. What killed Rockford was Stephen Cannell's lack of control in the show's later years. Kerry Lucarelli
Virginia, MN

GOING TO THE SOURCE

I enjoyed the first issue of *Video Action* and particularly liked the Stephen Cannell interview.

One thing especially caught my eye, that being your New Releases column. You listed *The Night Stalker* and *The Night Strangler* from ABC Video Enterprises. Could you please give me an address where I could write them for information? Edward Wilson
Saskatoon, Canada

(You can write to ABC Video Enterprises at 1330 Avenue of the Americans, New York, N.Y. 10019. For a complete listing of all distributors of video both large and small, we recommend *The Video Source Book* from the National Video Clearinghouse, Inc., available in most bookstores. We will be reviewing the Source Book next month. Ed.)

MARY HARTMAN ANYONE?

I bought and read with great interest your new magazine and thoroughly enjoyed it. I am a relatively new video freak, having only had my machine for a little over a year, but I have already worn out one VCR!

I'm interested in finding one thing in particular on tape: *Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman*. I bought my VCR expressly to get *MH2* on tape when I

heard CBS was going to start running it late night. Then they canceled it because the ratings were too low. I would appreciate finding someone with whom I might be able to trade for *MH2*.

Thanks for a great magazine and column. Keep up the great work. Linda R. Surface
Anderson, IN



THE BEST OF TIMES

The premiere issue of *Video Action* was exciting. Every page and every article of it. I'm eagerly looking forward to future issues.

The most fascinating article in the book was *Futurespeak*. It proves that in spite of any difficulties we might have in this day and age, this has still got to be one of the greatest times to live in. We have something to look ahead to. Betty Bendig
Chagrin Falls, OH

OVER PRICED

I watch as little television as possible—the medium is just too boring and insulting. There are some snatches of pleasure on the tube—*Rocky* and *Bullwinkle* cartoons, *Bums* and *Allen* reruns, *Taxi*, *M*A*S*H*—but the majority of the stuff is drudge.

Video machines could very well eliminate the negative aspects of television by allowing me to watch

selected programs rather than conforming to some economically dictated timeslot created to suck me into watching the machine all night. (I must admit to their success in this strategy: once the TV is on, I watch everything.)

The ability to run uncut films at home is also a nice selling point for VCRs, but, alas, I will have to wait to buy one due to price and the lack of a good, reasonably priced projection television screen. Watching a theatrical film on a television screen is no way to enjoy a movie. When the industry solves these problems, then I will probably make my purchase. Sherman Boyson
Greenfield, MA

A MAGAZINE WORTH READING

I have read most video magazines currently on the market and have found *Video Action* to be the best yet. I enjoyed it all and can't wait for next month's issue. Thank you for finally giving me a video magazine worth reading.

Stephen Davis
Blythville, AR

VIEW FROM ABROAD

I enjoyed the *Futurespeak* column in the first issue of *Video Action*. I recently attended an electronics show in Perth which highlighted several of the innovations mentioned in the piece. I agree that the 80s is going to be a decade of great development in the video and electronics field.

I also liked Paul Kupperberg's review of the Atari *Superman* home video game, as well as Richard Burton's informative piece on the British teletext system. Steve Mitchell's interview with Stephen Cannell was good, although I still do not know what killed off *The Rockford Files*. I envy the job of your X-rated reviewer.

A suggestion now if I may: the first issue of *Video Action* seemed directed specifically at the American television audience, though I would

imagine you would be looking towards an international readership. I'd like to see more on the video industry in other countries, along the lines of what Mr. Burton is covering in England.

Ray Chan
Perth, Australia

TV'S UNSUNG HEROES

I already get *Panorama* and the *Videophile*, but *Video Action* seems to be a more worthwhile magazine since it's slanted toward the consumer. The best part of your premiere issue was the Stephen Cannell interview. I'd like to see more dialogues with video's unsung-hero-types.

Richard Pachter
Miami, FL

PLAIN SPEAKING

Video Action really piqued my interest in an area of television that I felt was taboo. When I think of the future of television, my mind goes to those young IIT graduate-types who

sleep with slide rules and whose preferred bedtime reading is *Popular Mechanics*—that is, highly technical jargon. Fortunately for those boobtubularphiles who are not afflicted with hands on experience with computer components or those of us who don't have button-down collars and pens in our shirt pockets, this is not the way it has to be.

You have done a marvelous thing with *Video Action*. By writing articles on a number of new pieces of hard- and software, you've done something I didn't think possible: you've communicated technical information in understandable English. That alone was enough to floor me, but you went on from there to make such subjects as hardcore porno palatable was more than anyone could expect. Ross Levite
Chicago, IL

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NEW PRODUCTS

PICK A VCR, ANY VCR

For those of you who are still looking around trying to decide which of the literally dozens of videocassette recorders to purchase, your search has just become a bit more difficult. Added to the long list of VCRs already on the market is the new Hitachi VT-8500, a two-, four- or six-hour recording system.

The Hitachi VT-8500 retails for \$1295 and boasts a host of the most up-to-date features, including a cue-

The new Hitachi VCR also comes with a 13-function remote control for the abovementioned features, as well as a seven day, five program programmable memory, special circuitry to prevent memory wipeout during electrical brownouts (see this month's editorial) built-in VHF and UHF tuners with automatic fine tuning, a dew detector, picture sharpness control, and automatic rewind at the end of a tape. The VT-8500 is compatible with other, earlier model VCRs in the Hitachi line, as well as all other VHS machines.

So like it or not, there is yet another



and-review visual search capability, stop-frame, frame-by-frame advance, slow motion, fast speed, pause and visual forward/reverse and dual tracking controls. But that is not all.

VCR out there for you to choose from on the vast video market. And if this machine's features don't grab you, perhaps you can try "eenie, meenie, mynie, moe..."

SWITCH HITTER

Tired of constantly having to switch around cable leads whenever you



feel like watching cable instead of broadcast television? Well, crawl out from behind your set, because RMS Electronics, Inc. has announced the addition of a new television/VCR switch, the model ACS-10.

This new unit is described as an "antenna/cable" switch and will accept either a 75 ohm (round) or 300 ohm (flat) antenna input, as well as an input for cable TV. The output can be attached directly to any television set.

The ACS-10 is designed, according to the folks at RMS, so that the user may select regular or cable television programs with the mere flick of a switch. The three switches on the housing also enable the unit—which retails at \$22.95—to be used as a sophisticated "A-8" switch.

BIB'S BETTER BULKER

Still got those videotapes of your



mother-in-law's visit last Christmas laying around the house? If you would like to clear that tape to record something really important—like your pet poodle's birthday party—then you need a good bulk eraser. BIB has released the new VE-3 Video Cassette Eraser which may just be what the doctor ordered.

The VE-3 exceeds the erasure capability of built-in eraser heads found in current model VCRs. This hand-held bulkier, which retails for around \$50, contains a thermal protected circuit and ensures signal-free video tapes after the elimination of previously recorded material.

Now all you need do is make certain that you do not accidentally turn your VE-3 on while it is resting near your collection of rare *My Mother The Car* episodes.

"HAND ME THE MICROSCOPE — I WANNA MAKE A TAPE"

They just keep making VCRs smaller and smaller. Now, instead of being content with merely viewing and recording at home, videocassette recorder owners have the option of taking new smaller, lighter models with them for home tapes wherever they want.

JVC has joined the miniaturization race with their new HR-2200U recorder and camera system. It weighs a mere 11.4 pounds and is less than a foot wide at its widest point.

Like some of the other portables now hitting the market, the HR-2200U features remote control as well as a full range of special effects, including slow motion, freeze-frame and fast forward for convenient playback. The JVC also features a flexible three-way power capability that can draw from a

battery pack, household current or car battery.

CHARGE!

Tired of having to recharge the battery on your portable VCR all the time? Then a new line of high performance rechargeable nickel-cadmium battery packs designed to fit most portable VCRs and electronic news gathering television cameras ought to come as good news.

CINE 60 has just made available battery packs to fit most of the more popular model VCRs. They are designed to be direct replacements for most of the Sony battery packs as well as for the JVC lead-acid battery.

The nickel-cadmium packs feature a greater storage capacity for approximately 10-times longer life than either the JVC or Sony products, though the performance of the CINE 60 pack depends largely on the equipment you use it in. In most cases, however, a charge will last anywhere from one to almost four hours. It can be fast charged to full capacity in one hour or slow charged overnight, though both types of charging require separate external chargers.

The size of the unit you want depends on the model you own, but all weigh in at about three pounds, are one and a half inches thick and retail for between \$195 and \$255.



NEXT YEAR'S MODEL WILL COME WITH AN USHER

Bigger may not always be better but when it comes to our television screens, it seems we cannot get them big enough. The Advent Corporation has taken yet another giant-screen step in satisfying the public's demand for super-sized viewing with the new Model VB225 projection television.

The six-foot, two-piece model incorporates state-of-the-art optics, a solid state chassis and random access remote control. Also included is switching for various video sources: discs, tapes, cable, games, etc. Advent also prom-

ises superior sound from the Model VB225 thanks to a wide-range acoustic suspension speaker.

The six-foot screen also claims to deliver top-notch performance under normal lighting conditions, and all for a mere \$3295.

VCRS & VIDEO DISCS

VIDEO, VIDEO AND MORE VIDEO

The experts gathered recently in Miami and they all had something interesting to say about current trends in the exploding video field. The word from on high, for those who like things keep simple, is caution.

The topics discussed at the Muxepro convention included the consumer's wariness of home video equipment due to the great amount of incompatibility between various systems. Henry Brief, president of the International Tape Association noted some examples: the latest model Beta and VHS VCRs are incompatible not only with one another but with earlier models of their respective lines as well; three radically different videocassette systems are, or will shortly be, competing; a new quarter-inch tape videotape recorder from Funai is currently trying to carve a niche for itself in a market now dominated with one-half-inch tape systems.

The problems of incompatibility aside, Brief said he nevertheless expects the video market to be a \$5 billion industry by 1985. He pointed to current videocassette sales in the U.S. as an example of the booming field: non-pornographic videocassettes are expected to sell a total of 2,250,000 units this year alone. (Porno sales, incidentally, now account for only one-quarter of the prerecorded tape market as opposed to about 70 per cent just a few years back.) Video hardware manufacturers will be turning out more units of equipment in 1981 than ever before.

Lee Rothchild, vice president of Video Discount Center, Inc., believes the public has been confused by the early introduction of high-priced video equipment a couple of years back which was followed by the current crop of more sophisticated machines at somewhat lower prices. Rothchild told the conference, "I don't want to see the public so confused that they don't know when to get in or what to get into."

The home video market, he warned, could face a potentially disastrous situation if two areas of current contention are not dealt with. Home video will be competing with cable

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television unless the movie industry guarantees video suppliers second place for film releases right behind theaters. Otherwise, Rothchild believes, the buyer will be hesitant to purchase a movie when he knows he can watch the same thing on cable and even tape it directly off his set.

* Bootlegging of tapes also worries Rothchild because, "I see the people involved in this business doing very little to stop the problem." He and fellow panelist Dick Broderick of New York University called for concerted industry pressure on the government to enforce antipiracy measures.

"BUT SOFTWARE . . . WHAT FIGHT THROUGH YONDER WINDOW BROKE . . .?"

By now, the great videodisc war is well under way across the length and breadth of this land. Previously confined to boardroom skirmishes and convention hall debates, the hostilities have now spilled over into the press and the public eye, especially with the multi-million dollar ad campaigns being employed by Pioneer and Magnavox for their compatible laser optical disc players.

After having established a logistical jump on their main adversary—RCA's

non-compatible SelectaVision disc player—Magnavox and its ally in the world of research and development, Pioneer, hope the introduction of their system will before RCA's hit the marketplace has given them enough ground to withstand the expected counter-attack.

That attack promises to be a strong one. RCA has been lining up an impressive distribution network for their machine and library of movies which includes such outlets as Sears and J.C. Penney. Also on RCA's side is price: the SelectaVision stylus system—which has also been adapted for manufacture by Zenith and Sanyo—will sell for around \$500 as compared to the \$750 tag on the laser optical disc system.

Public snarling over the matter has already begun. At last October's World Video Trade Conference in Cannes, France, a roundtable debate took place and one-upmanship seemed to be the name of the game when it came to the projected sales figures being tossed about. Disciples of the laser optical system claim they will sell 1,000,000 of their units in the U.S. by 1985, while RCA's stylus system fans claim they will have 200,000 units out there by the end of '81. This, RCA says, will mean that 30% to 50% of all American

homes with color televisions will be using their system by 1990. They hope.

Thus far it is all a lot of saber rattling, but the answers to this dilemma will undoubtedly become apparent within the next few months when the competition between the two systems hits the marketplace in full force.

And, waiting patiently in the wings for that answer are such Japanese firms as Hitachi, Toshiba and Mitsubishi, none of whom are in any rush to back one system or another. As things now stand, the Japanese manufacturers will probably opt for whichever one wins the battle in the U.S., adopt that format as their national standard and then head for our shores to take on the winner in a head-to-head battle.

(Video Action will be taking an in-depth look at the videodisc war in our feature pages next month.)

VCR OWNERS: NOT BETA THAN EVER

When videocassette recorders first became available for home use, it was a toss-up as to whether the VHS or Beta format would grab the majority share of the ever-expanding VCR market. Well, it has been several years now, and the results are finally in.

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VIDEO ACTION EXPRESS

Next month, VIDEO ACTION will be instituting a new reader service column, "Video Action Express." If you have a problem with a video manufacturer or dealer, if you cannot get satisfaction from a direct mail merchant, if you cannot get quality service from your cable or pay television supplier, or if you just have a particular question about the world of video, write us. We will do our best to clear up the problem.

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We regret we cannot take queries by phone, nor can we respond to each letter on an individual basis.

According to a survey by Media Statistics, the VHS system has captured the lion's share of the market with 64 per cent of all the VCRs in use. In a survey of the 16 major VCR markets, Media Statistics discovered two per cent of all television homes have a VCR, with RCA retaining its lead over the competition with almost a third of the new sales market. RCA's nearest competitor is Sony, followed by Panasonic, Magnavox, Zenith and all other VCR manufacturers far, far behind.

PREPARE TO BE CLUBBED TO DEATH

With so many VCRs and videodisc machines flooding the consumer market these days, it is virtually impossible to keep up with the increasing demand for video software through traditional retailing methods. Over the years, at least two dozen video clubs have sprung up, allowing the VCR owner to order everything from pre-recorded movies to Spanish lessons through the mail. And now, ready to join such established clubs as Time-Life Home Video and the Video Club of America are two of the industry's giants, CBS and MCA.

Both companies are considering starting their own separate direct mail

video clubs, which would be similar to the standard book and record clubs. MCA's business affairs vice-president Barry Reiss points out one result of their club would be to carry a line of specialized titles which regular retailers might find either extraneous or poor sellers. Also, with burgeoning cassette and disc software inventories, clubs could be geared to appeal to specific genre audiences, specializing in horror, comedy, mystery and so on.

MCA is currently considering the advisability of the "negative option," a mainstay of the record and book clubs wherein club members receive selections by not returning their form. They are also mulling over the possibility of joining forces with such existing clubs as Time-Life and the Video Club of America. They would, however, like to offer their product to the specialized genre audiences as well, something current clubs do not provide.

CBS plans on launching its video club in the summer or fall of 1981 but, since final plans have yet to be made, the company has little to say about it at this time.

Just to be on the safe side, it is probably best to load up on stamps now to mail back your club forms. After all, you wouldn't want to receive

a copy of Santa Claus Versus the Martians just because you forgot to send in your form.

IF YOU CAN'T BEAT 'EM... MAKE 'EM PAY A RENTAL FEE

With the fact of a growing unauthorized—albeit legal—spread of videocassette rentals by dealers across the country, many manufacturers and distributors are adopting a definite "join 'em" attitude rather than spending more money than it is probably worth to "lick 'em." Eyeing the wealth of potential profits in such a move, the Walt Disney organization has decided to grab their share of the rental market, this after being in the videocassette field for less than a year.

Disney will offer dealers a choice to rent, sell or do both with their line of prerecorded material. Dealers will, for example, be able to rent a cassette for \$52 for a thirteen week period from Disney and may, in turn, rent it out to the consumer for as long and as much as they like. These cassettes will be labeled "For rental only, not intended for sale" and the participating dealers will be required to sign an agreement not to sell these rental tapes and, likewise, not to rent out

(Continued on page 22)

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HBO CLONES ITSELF

A talk with Cinemax Programming Chief ANGELA SCHAPIRO

INTERVIEW by Steve Mitchell

THE PHRASE "HOME BOX Office" has become generic, the way "Kleenex" and "Xerox" have become accepted as representing a type of service in addition to a specific product. Since developing its Home Box Office pay television service, Time-Life has seen a number of competing pay networks: The Movie Channel, Show Time, On-TV to name but a few.

Noting the growing number of cable systems that offer two such movie channels, the folks at Time-Life decided to join in the fun, creating its second Home Box type of service—Cinemax. This younger sibling differs in one important respect: This month, it became the first major subscription service to operate 24 hours a day.

For the all-important role of programmer—vice-president in charge of programming: the person who is responsible for selecting the movies broadcast by the service—Time-Life hired Angela Schapiro.

Ms. Schapiro has a vast and varied broadcast background: working as

an assistant to sports documentary producer Bud Greenspan from 1968 to 1972, Schapiro moved on to several executive positions in the then-developing cable industry before she was hired by Warner Cable as program director of its movie channel and a member of its crucially important QUBE Task Force. She later moved on to Columbia Pictures to help establish their pay-television system.

VIDEO ACTION: Basically, what is Cinemax?

ANGELA SCHAPIRO: Cinemax is Home Box Office's second satellite service. It is specifically designed to be complementary, intended for the heavy user.

VA: Now, I know Cinemax is in its infancy, and I am sure it will develop, but how is it different now?

SCHAPIRO: It's almost entirely movies, with the exception of some children's programming that we are running in the daytime, and some dramatic afternoon specials, which

are movies in their own way.

VA: Are the specials produced by Home Box Office?

SCHAPIRO: No, they are specials that have been produced by independent producers. Some of them have been on the networks. They have won Emmys and other awards. There is nowhere else for them to go. It's a shame to see good children's programming like that get lost. It's an exception that we're making—but everything else is movies, and we have a much longer programming day than Home Box Office—we now broadcast around the clock. We're trying to be slightly more modularized in our approach to programming. In the morning and around lunchtime we're trying as much as possible to program movies that have female appeal. We feel that is our audience at that time, and we think it's a good alternative to game shows.

From four in the afternoon until about eight at night, we have children's and family programming. The children's programming is on until about 6:00, and then we segue into family programming. We will not run any R-rated programs before 8:00 at night.

VA: Doesn't HBO usually start their R-rated films at 9:00?

SCHAPIRO: Well, it depends. Sometimes we will have a movie which we feel we should not play at 7:00 in the midwest, so we'll schedule that film for 9:00.

VA: Would a good example be something like *The Deer Hunter*?

SCHAPIRO: Yes, that is more like a 9:00 movie.

VA: Why did Time-Life decide to create a new cable service when there is so much competition in the pay cable market already?

SCHAPIRO: Well, we had an interesting experience. We did have a second service before, called *Take Two*. It was a mini-service for G and PG movies only. Essentially we designed that in response to the industry—cable companies had come to us and said they were looking for a mini-pay service—they felt the market was composed of those people who either had not bought cable television or who had cable but not pay stations. Some people had a violent objection to R-rated movies in their living rooms.

It turned out the demand was not as great as we thought it would be, but it was also different. Instead of creating a new market, what we found was that people who were buying were people who had already had pay television. We discovered that there was a section of the pay television market that really wanted more.

VA: Meaning more movies?

SCHAPIRO: Right, and that led us to develop Cinemax. A maxi-service. We were also experiencing this phenomenon of tiering, where cable operators would bleed off more than one pay-movie service in their markets. For instance, they received Show Time and HBO, or they got HBO and the Movie Channel, and so forth.

VA: Do you think the demand for a service like Cinemax was created out of the fact that pay cable subscribers wanted more mature programming?

SCHAPIRO: No, because the people who bought the *Take Two* service

Some people had a violent objection to R-rated movies in their living room.

were not dissatisfied with the G/PG content.

VA: Looking at your Cinemax programs to date, we're reminded of Home Box Office programming from a couple of years back when the schedule contained more foreign and independent product, and less product from the major studios. In terms of the Cinemax programming, is it a conscious choice to have more of that kind of programming, or is that just what you could put on because all your other product was going to HBO?

SCHAPIRO: Conscious and by design. To put things in perspective, HBO runs about six foreign movies a year. The reason that HBO was running such a heavy load was they thought it worked. Research ultimately showed it did not. Subscribers just did not want that kind of movie, and we feel we can afford to be a little bit more focused in our programming with Cinemax. We're really assuming that Cinemax subscribers already have HBO; that is not to say that someone with Show Time or Movie Channel can't have Cinemax, but we're not designing it for them, we're designing it for HBO subscribers. We still have to remain fairly flexible, because no matter how much research we have done in the past, it's still not the same as having a service out there in people's homes.

The whole idea is to be able to create a better service for the sub-

scriber.

VA: We've heard that the stereotypical HBO subscriber is a middle-aged fellow with thinning hair who wears a T-shirt and drinks a lot of beer, and that programming on HBO is designed for that sort of person.

SCHAPIRO: I don't think so. Obviously we have a certain number of subscribers who are aging with the service, people who were in their late twenties eight years ago and now are getting towards being in their late thirties. Certainly they tend to be better educated and in a higher income bracket.

VA: There seem to be fewer foreign films on HBO and more films of the less-than-intellectual variety.

SCHAPIRO: If you were to compare HBO with Cinemax, and you were only going to buy one service, you would buy HBO because HBO is the "broad appeal" service.

VA: If I had Show Time, for example, as my pay cable service, could I subscribe to Cinemax?

SCHAPIRO: Sure, if your cable operator offered it to you. It's that simple.

VA: Let's talk about programming a little bit. What are your goals in terms of Cinemax programming?

SCHAPIRO: I guess our goals are to differentiate as much as possible from HBO and yet at the same time maintain a high standard of quality in the movies.

VA: Does the programming on Cinemax reflect your personal taste in movies or the taste of your subscribers as you found from the demographics?

SCHAPIRO: Well, I should hope the taste of our subscribers. If it reflects my personal taste, or the taste of those people who are working with me, then we're not doing a very good job. You always have to make that distinction between what you enjoy and what is right for the service.

VA: Have you ever received any angry letters from your Cinemax subscribers saying, "I don't like foreign films. Why don't you put on more American films?"

SCHAPIRO: No, I think the pay television subscriber is the one who is least likely to write such a letter. Just by the mere fact that he is paying for movies shows he is interested.

VA: Let's talk about acquiring films for Cinemax. There just aren't as many movies being made today as there used to be. We would imagine that competition between the pay services must be very keen when it comes to acquiring prestigious films. Are you having problems getting

product for Cinemax?

SCHAPIRO: There's a big market out there, if you go beyond the majors. There are a lot of independents that have a lot of films that may not necessarily always get a wide national release.

VA: We can think of one example which you programmed on Cinemax, *The Ravagers*. That film had a spotty national release. It didn't even play in New York.

SCHAPIRO: There are so many sleepers out there. A classic example is *The Great Santini*. Sometimes a film will get lost because it was released at the same time as five or six other very good films. A film's success generally depends on the advertising and marketing campaign.

VA: For example: A New World picture might not have an advertising budget equal to something from one of the major studios, and as a result will not have the high visibility of a major studio film.

SCHAPIRO: But in their case you are dealing with a different market because New World produces a certain type of film, and they're gearing them to a fairly specific audience. They know pretty much what their revenue is going to be on most of the films and they're not looking to succeed any further.

VA: We've noticed that HBO has programmed independent films that were produced for regional markets and specific tastes. *Buckstone County Prison* comes to mind. Is Cinemax looking towards airing films of that kind?

SCHAPIRO: One of the biggest, most time-consuming jobs that is done for Cinemax is the actual screening of product.

VA: How much time do you personally spend in screening rooms during the course of a week?

SCHAPIRO: Very little, actually. We have some terrific people that do that for us.

VA: Do you feel that there is enough product to keep HBO and Cinemax supplied without any dovetailing of product? I noticed in your guide that Cinemax was showing films that were recently broadcast on HBO.

SCHAPIRO: Some of the films have performed really well on Home Box Office, but what we try to do is put as much time between the two as possible because we have to work within fairly well defined availability periods. Sometimes that is not wholly under our control. But we do try to space it out as much as possible.

VA: What kind of films have you found are worth repeating?

SCHAPIRO: The action movies.

The blockbusters do well, but action movies perform very well, and maybe that's because pay TV subscribers tend to be predominately male.

VA: Some of the action programming on Cinemax like *Escape to Athena*, *Love and Bullets*, *The Ravagers*—none of those films did very well in the theaters, while they seem to be performing very well on cable. Can you explain that?

SCHAPIRO: Well, I guess they're films that either got lost in the shuffle, or the public decided to see only

window between the end of the network run and the beginning of the syndication run. Before we had the sequential distribution pattern where the movie went to the theaters first, then the network, and then into syndication.

So pay television was interposed between theatrical and commercial networks, and then went into syndication. Now you've got theatrical, pay television, commercial networks, back to pay television, and syndication. What we're finding now, since



The distributors are now beginning to create a small window for cable between the end of the network run and the beginning of the syndicated run

Angela Schapiro

certain films. They'll go see the blockbusters even if they're not really heavy movie-goers. They won't necessarily go and see the smaller or lesser films, and perhaps this is what they enjoy about pay TV.

Films do very well without necessarily getting wide national release. There are many movie theaters in the south where a reasonably low-budget film can do very well. In order for a film to take up time in a movie theater it has to be one of your bigger budget films, otherwise the exhibitors are not going to book it for any length of time.

VA: Do you get many letters asking for films with specific actors? Do subscribers want to see more films with actors such as Clint Eastwood or Charles Bronson?

SCHAPIRO: Oh, sure—and we also ask our subscribers what they want to see. We send out monthly questionnaires. It's not always easy to put together festivals. What happens is you'll end up with probably 75% of the movies that might make up a festival. The rest are already in syndication.

VA: We noticed something that was being done on HBO with Clint Eastwood films. HBO was running films that had just completed their network run, and they were airing some of them prior to their being syndicated.

SCHAPIRO: The distributors are now beginning to create a small

window between the end of the network run and the beginning of the syndicated run. Before we had the sequential distribution pattern where the movie went to the theaters first, then the network, and then into syndication.

VA: We noticed that Channel 13 (PBS in New York) has been picking up a good number of old films that used to be in syndication. Films like *Lives of a Bengal Lancer* and *Beau Geste* for example, which are a part of a package of classic Paramount films. We also noticed that you are running *The Stranger* and *A Star Is Born* on Cinemax. Do you think at some point that Cinemax will be in competition with the local syndicated stations for the old classics?

SCHAPIRO: I don't think so. I most certainly am not looking for exclusivity. What we're selling is a movie that is uninterrupted by commercials. Usually what you'll find on the independent stations in any case is that they are run late at night and heavily interrupted by commercials.

VA: Do you think that some of your subscribers like to have the opportunity to see certain movies eight, nine, ten, and eleven times?

SCHAPIRO: Absolutely, and be able to see them not only six or seven times, but to be able to see them again a year later or even three years later.

You have to look at how HBO and Cinemax work together, rather than

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Classic, contemporary, and foreign fare contribute to the CINEMAX programming.

look at them in limbo. We program each other. If it was say, an action movie, or a sports event on HBO, then we will program something more female-oriented—a romantic comedy, for example, on Cinemax. A foreign movie on Cinemax then would become something else on HBO. There aren't any specials on Cinemax, so there will always be a movie while there's a special on HBO.

We try to counterprogram genres as much as possible.

VA: Some people who have seen *Superman* will probably want to see it again. And anybody who has not seen it will also want to watch it. In a house that has both HBO and Cinemax, Cinemax may not get much play time. If you're a subscriber to both services and have only one set to watch blockbusters on HBO, you may not want Cinemax because you feel the extra service is not worth watching.

SCHAPIRO: But subscribers buy the extra service because they want more and they want choices and they want more opportunities to view different programs, not necessarily more opportunities to see the same shows. That is one of the things that came out of our research—the opportunity to see more and different programs instead of the opportunity to see the same shows.

If you're only going to buy one service, the HBO is the one you will buy because of its "broad appeal." If you are a heavy viewer, then you will buy the two, and what we're trying to bring to you on Cinemax is yes,

some duplication at the top end, but in the middle range the same quality with different titles.

VA: We know you are premiering some major films on Cinemax that HBO hasn't had yet—*Saturn Three* and *The Amityville Horror* for example. Will there still be that four-month period before those films show up on HBO, and don't you think by splitting the premieres you are diluting the impact of the services?

SCHAPIRO: No, Cinemax will never be programmed at the expense of HBO. It is nice sometimes to have something premiere on Cinemax.

VA: So the bottom line is that HBO is your million dollar baby and you're not going to do anything to change that.

SCHAPIRO: We've got over four million subscribers right now who have HBO but who don't have Cinemax. We're not going to mess with that.

VA: Geographically, where have you conducted your research surveys?

SCHAPIRO: We go all around the country because this is a national service that is in urban and rural areas alike. It would be difficult for us to survey non-cable subscribers. We don't expect them to know what cable service is all about.

VA: You were talking about "classic" films before. Have people that you've surveyed asked for specific classic films?

SCHAPIRO: Oh yes. And there are different concepts of what is a classic movie. For many people, classic means pre-1948. On the other hand,

there are films now that are maybe as recent as the late '60's and early '70's that could be called classics.

VA: What do you think the future of cable is going to be like? Do you think this country is going to be interested in paying money to watch television when they can watch free commercial television?

SCHAPIRO: It certainly seems to be happening. I think in the future, cable is going to develop an extensive array of services—not necessarily entertainment programming.

VA: Can you give us an example?

SCHAPIRO: Things that make one's life easier. Maybe banking or shopping at home. There are a number of things that one will be able to do with cable. We're going to have to spend a great deal of time educating subscribers to use and accept these various services. An industry newsletter claims that by 1990, 50% of the United States will be wired for cable. Compared to the approximately 16 to 18 million homes now wired.

VA: What can we expect from Cinemax in the future?

SCHAPIRO: In terms of titles?

VA: Titles and any other sort of unusual programming.

SCHAPIRO: As to titles—yes we know, and I'd love to discuss them with you, but I can't because that's part of the surprise. We do not foresee any major changes at the moment. Right now we are beginning to track the subscribers that we have, see how they are responding to what we are offering them right now. We want to be responsive.

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Newsline

(Continued from page 15)

tapes that were produced on a for-sale basis.

Other studios are expected to follow suit shortly with similar programs as the profit potential for such a rental system is impressive to say the least. A cassette that would retail for \$60, rented 50 times, would bring in close to \$500.

A few snags will have to be ironed out first before everyone gets into the act. Gene Giaquinto, president of MCA Videocassette, noted, "What happens when you sell a group of your sale cassettes to retailer A, and he ships them to retailer B three states away, who then goes into the rental business?" Since the second retailer did not sign the aforementioned rental agreement with the supplier, Giaquinto continued, "How do you stop it? How do you police the rental system?" Everyone involved admits this is an enormous, probably insurmountable undertaking.

Still, since there really is no easy solution to this type of legalized piracy, it is expected that the big boys in videocassette supply will simply follow the example of the little fellows and add their number to the rental ranks. If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.

HARDWARE WARS

If the business of America is indeed business, then the business of the burgeoning videodisc industry has most certainly got to be getting their hands on a piece of that action. And this attitude is confirmed in a report

recently released by Strategic Business Services, Inc., "The Impact of Videodisc Technology (Optical Memories) on Existing Media and Equipment."

The report predicts in the future videodiscs will become the standard form of information storage in word/data processing. SBSI believes current storage systems such as microfilm, microfiche, magnetic tape and discs and video tape will become obsolete in the face of the superior storage qualities of videodiscs. Further, companies presently manufacturing these systems will lose out to those involved in laser optics.

Already, the report points out, numerous advanced information retrieval systems involving videodisc technology are available: the MegaDoc system from N.V. Phillips, Hughes Aircraft's TMS system, as well as new contributions from Westinghouse, Sony and M.I.T.

Another report, however, states widespread corporate and institutional use of videodiscs is at least a half decade away. D/J Brush Associates surveyed businesses for their "Private TV" study and found fully 75 per cent had seen disc demonstrations and were enthusiastic about it, but few of them saw much use for disc technology in their organizations at the present time.

Survey respondents cited several reasons for their reticence: the high cost of players, disc masters and duplication, the inability to reuse the discs, lack of adequate storage capacity and their current commitment to ½-inch videocassette tapes.

Of course, before that happens, the subscribers will have to be convinced that commercials between the movies will not be annoying and that such advertising will help keep the costs of cablecasting down.

WANNA BUY A NEWS NETWORK?

After just over six months on the air, Ted Turner's 24-hour Cable News Network (CNN) is finally pulling things together. While the managerial and talent staff is at last stabilizing, they likewise are experiencing good news on the subscriber front. As things now stand, Turner is adding an average of 10,000 new subscribers to CNN every day.

The most notable shots in the arm were agreements signed with Teleprompter and Warner-Amex, two of the country's major cableers. Teleprompter has committed 300,000 new subscribers to CNN over the next six months, while Warner-Amex brings them an additional 250,000

homes in Houston, Pittsburgh and Cincinnati.

While such an increase is good for any business, it is especially fortuitous for Mr. Turner. He recently announced that CNN was going public to raise the \$25,000,000 necessary to pay off what one Turner Broadcasting attorney called "a long term (bank) debt." The public offering will consist of debentures, common stock and warrants to purchase additional stock.

Will the CNN be able to work its way out of debt? Buying their stock might be a better risk than betting against it.

WHAT'S RED AND GREEN, POPS OUT OF YOUR TV SCREEN AND GIVES YOU A HEADACHE?

If you are getting nostalgic for some of the tomfoolery that made the 1950's what they were, then you had best pack up and move out to Los Angeles. It is there that one of that decade's biggest flops can be seen on television—3-D!

LA's Select TV pay television channel has announced that beginning in De-



cember of 1980, they will broadcast 3-D versions of some old films, including *Miss Sadie Thompson* and an unspecified *Three Stooges* short feature. Both have already been transferred to the standard double red and green 3-D images for broadcast and the SelectTV folks are offering two pair of the funny 3-D glasses free through a coupon in their regular viewing guide. For those with a larger family, additional glasses are being sold through Sears at \$1.25 for two pair.

3-D is also just becoming available on videocassette as well. As noted last issue, several of the older '50s films originally shot in the complicated 3-D process are now available from MCA. *House of Wax*, *The Creature From the Black Lagoon* and *It Came From Outer Space* are among the first titles in general release.

CABLE

AT LEAST NOW WE'LL HAVE TIME TO GRAB A COLD BEER

The major draw of pay and cable television, the common wisdom says, is uncut, commercial-free movies and programs. But don't take our word for it—that is what a recent study of pay television by the U.S. Media Resources and Research organization tells us.

The report paints a "very bright future" for pay and cable and projects a doubling of the number of households that currently subscribe by 1985, as well as yet another doubling of that number by 1990 when fully one-third of the country's television sets will be hooked into one system or another.

That is the good news for the cable systems. The report predicts even more good news, but this time only for the system operators. According to their predictions, the consumer will loose out when, in all probability, cable ceases to be commercial-free.

BROADCAST

JEEPERS, MR. PEEPERS!

Maybe there is nothing new under the sun, but some of the old stuff is so good that shouldn't make much difference. That is undoubtedly why two classic television shows—one from television's infancy, the other from its adolescence—are scheduled to return in the upcoming season.

Sunrise Enterprises has started selling the syndication rights to 100 half-hour shows from the classic Mr. Peepers series that ran from 1952-55 on NBC. The Los Angeles-based syndicator recently bought the rights to 130 shows and is in the process of transferring the original kinescopes to film, although 30 of those will not be placed in syndication. Sunrise expects to sell the series—which starred Wally Cox, Tony Randall, Jack Warden, Arthur O'Connell and Marion Lane—as a summer replacement series.

Also making a return to the tube is the classic western series, *Maverick*. *Maverick*, however, will be all new, although unlike it's last "new" incarnation starring Charles Frank as the Young *Maverick*, James Garner will be returning this time around to recreate his role as Brett *Maverick*. Scheduled for the 1980-81 season, the series will fulfill Garner's contractual agreement to NBC left hanging with the cancellation of the long-running *Rockford Files*.

IT'S YOUR OWN FAULT!

If you are getting poor reception on the UHF band of your television set, don't go looking to the FCC for help. In answer to the many critics of UHF reception quality who have called on the FCC to pressure both broadcasters and set manufacturers to do something, the Commission has issued a staff study on the matter. And guess what?

They recommend the viewers get better antennas. This, the report says, will improve UHF faster and better than anything the FCC could do in requiring changes at the broadcast or manufacturing end.

The two year study states, "to seek improvements in transmitters and television receivers without recognizing the root problem of the UHF handicap—that members of the public are not installing adequate receiving antennas for good UHF reception—will do little" to remedy the situation.

The FCC did, however, call on broadcasters and set distributors to provide set buyers with booklets outlining which antennas work best and what additional steps the viewer can take to enhance picture quality.



WE CAN HEAR TED MACK TURNING IN HIS GRAVE NOW

One would imagine that with such programs as the \$1.98 *Beauty Show* and *The Gong Show* under his belt, anything created from the somewhat whacky mind of Chuck Barris would be a bit on the unusual side. But that is an image of the past as *Barris* is even now working hard at his new, "straight" hour-long syndicated program, *The Million Dollar Talent Show*.

Premiering in the fall of 1981, the *Talent Show* is scheduled for 25 episodes at a budget of \$2,800,000—

minus the million snackeroos that goes to the eventual winner. The show will expose unknowns to a national audience in the 25 week competition for the prize, all, apparently, without the patented *Barris* bizarreness.

And in yet another salute to creeping normalcy, *Barris Productions* is also planning a new talk show for next season. Leave it to the *Women* will feature talk on various and sundry topics on all our minds these days. But what is really unusual about this *Barris Production* offering is that the participants will not be required to wear bathing suits.

YET ANOTHER NEW HOME FOR FREDDY SILVERMAN?

Ever since the DuMont Television Network bit the dust in 1955, the Big Three networks have had the field all to themselves. But now an FCC staff report has been released that encourages the development of the long-awaited fourth net.

The study, which was two years in the making at a cost of \$1,200,000, states the lack of a fourth network is a consequence of the marketplace cre-

ated by the FCC through various structural allocations dating back to 1952.

Though not including any specific recommendations for FCC action which would open up the possibility of making the oft-fabled network a reality, the report nevertheless endorses its existence in principle and went on to say greater competition could be accomplished through less regulation.

Just imagine—if this fourth network does come about, we can expect yet another schedule full of television fare. The question is, can we take it?

NOBODY EXPECTS MONTY PYTHON ON NETWORK TV

Several years back, ABC-TV purchased the rights to a half dozen episodes of the zany *Monty Python's Flying Circus* show from England's BBC network to show in their late night timeslot. ABC had agreed to run the shows unedited—the only way the *Pythons* would agree to sell the shows. But when they eventually showed up on the air, the programs were

anything but unabridged. Python took ABC to court and won a decision that withdrew the network's right to broadcast their creations again.

For the years following the ABC debacle, the group refused to sell their material to American commercial television if it meant editing it down for our delicate sensibilities. But that has all changed now and the *Pythons* have agreed to edit 44 of their *Flying Circus* shows and four of their movies for distribution by Telepictures Cor-

(Continued on page 28)

NOVICE'S GUIDE TO HOME COMPUTERS

Learning the ins and outs of home data processing can be easier than you think.

ARTICLE by Rick Oliver

IN RESPONSE TO HIS instructions, a message appears on the cathode ray tube (CRT) screen: "Attack computer on." He requests specific data on the enemy's location, speed and direction and then orders the attack computer to calculate the necessary missile trajectories. He selects a target and fires. Anxious seconds pass as he waits for the results.

Suddenly, a light blinks on behind him. He turns to face... his father. At an impatient glance from the older man, the boy gets up and leaves the room. Hardly a noble end for a budding starship captain.

The father takes the seat at the computer console recently vacated by his son and types a series of commands on the keyboard. The latest stock prices for selected companies illuminate the CRT screen. He inserts the stock analysis cartridge, enters the new data, and runs the program. The computer flashes graphs of projected yields. He decides to sell stock in one company and invest in another and instructs his computer to send the information to his broker's computer. The transaction is completed without the two men ever speaking to one another.

A scenario of the future? Hardly. All this and more is available with home computers today. The microcomputer revolution brings the sophisticated world of computer tech-



*ATARI INC.

Atari's Intellivision has two main components—the master component and the keyboard with built-in cassette drive.

nology into your living room for as little as two hundred dollars. If you currently own or have considered buying one of those cartridge machines that turn your television into a personal video game center, you might want to consider the alternative of the infinitely more flexible home computer.

The world of microcomputers consists of two integrally related categories of material: hardware and software. The hardware is the mechanical aspect of the computer, the machines and electronic gadgetry that make it all possible. The core of the system is the central processing unit which contains the circuitry that does the computer's "thinking." It has a keyboard similar to that of a

typewriter, and the entire central unit is not much larger.

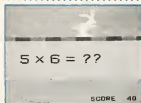
Information is typically displayed on a CRT monitor and many systems can utilize a normal television set for this purpose. No sophisticated wiring is required on the part of the user. Just connect the unit to your television, plug it into the nearest wall socket, and your personal computer is ready to go to work.

Additional hardware, commonly referred to as peripherals, is also available. Line printers, telephone modems, and cassette or disk drives can be added to the central unit, enhancing the computer's versatility and capabilities.

But it is software that makes the microcomputer a useful tool for the



Take music lessons from your personal computer. The Atari model 400 (shown at left) can utilize the same software as the more expensive model 800.



*Copyright Texas Instruments Inc.

Fed up with public schools? Let the Texas Instruments' home computer help your children learn basic skills.



*Copyright Apple Computer Inc.

Vidoe art—just one of the many uses for the home computer. This pattern was created with the Apple II which has axceptional graphic capabilities.



The acoustic modem enables the user to link-up with other computers and telecommunication networks.

average person who thinks "byte" is something dogs do to mailmen. Software is preprogrammed material which is purchased separately from the computer itself and enables you to do everything from charting bi-rhythms to learning conversational Swahili without knowing anything about computer programming. Software packages are available in cartridges, cassettes, or diskettes (paper thin disks about the size of a 45 rpm record) and cover a wide variety of subjects.

We have established that just about anyone can use a microcomputer. But what can the computer do for you? To begin with, it can help pay for itself. Software is available for analyzing stock trends and completing tax returns. Rather than trying to keep track of all those receipts and deductions, you can enter them into your computerized tax file. When the time comes to fill out the dreaded 1040, the computer will display the form line by line, recalling the pertinent income data and deductions. With a friend like that who needs H and R Block?

On a more personal level, you can buy programs to do your astrological chart or your daily biorhythm. If you are overweight or a health nut, the computer can design a personalized exercise program based on such data as age, weight and height. It will then monitor your progress.

For those who wish to expand their horizons, the computer can teach new skills. The home computer can give music lessons, teach you a foreign language or hone atrophied math skills. It will ask questions, give little quizzes to make sure you understand the material and doggedly repeat unlearned lessons with infinite patience. In time, the home computer could become a viable alternative to the public education system.

You can even design your own software. You don't know how to

write computer programs? No problem. Just insert the cartridge (or cassette or disk) that will teach you BASIC (Beginners All-Purpose Symbolic Instruction Code) and become an overnight computer jock. As the name implies, BASIC is geared toward the novice. It is based on plain English and is so simple to learn that you probably can begin writing your own programs after only a few hours of instruction.

And of course there are games. As a matter of fact, some of the recent entries in the home computer sweepstakes are better known for their video game machines: Mattel, Atari and APF are now marketing "personal" computers that do far more than play games. No need

Program cartridges are available that will teach you how to become an overnight computer jock.

to spend a fortune in quarters on *Space Invaders* at the local bar. Atari will soon offer its *Space Invaders* package, with over 100 variations, on cassette for use with the Atari Model 400 and 800 microcomputers (not to be confused with Atari's incompatible *Space Invaders* home cartridge game).

For the more erudite, the computer can play chess or backgammon. Software is available for the Apple II to play a variation of the cult game *Dungeons and Dragons*.

I walked into a computer store to get some information on the Apple II, expecting to be completely baffled by references to bits, bytes, and core capacity. Instead, I had to wait impatiently while two computerheads debated the pros and cons of using the magic sword to escape from a room full of poisonous snakes.

If you buy the right unit, the home

computer can even talk. Texas Instruments' TI-99/4 has an optional speech synthesizer that comes equipped with over 350 commonly used words already in its memory. More words or phrases can be added by the user and incorporated into programs. Radio Shack offers a speech synthesizer for its TRW-80 microcomputer, and one is planned for Mattel's Intellivision.

A device called a modem can enable owners of home computers to tap into practically limitless sources of information via the telephone. One can connect a microcomputer to larger and more sophisticated computers hundreds of miles away or transmit data from one computer to another simply by inserting the telephone receiver into the cradle of the modem. Services already exist for supplying information on stock prices, commodities futures, airline schedules, weather and news to computers through telephone lines.

This ability to link up with other computers and receive data over the telephone is called networking and is available to owners of personal computers for modest monthly fees. Currently, the two main contenders in computer networking are The Source (Source Telecomputing Corp. of America) and CompuServe Information Service, formerly MicroNet (CompuServe, Inc.).

The Source gives the user access to the UPI newswire, the New York Times Consumer Data Base (containing some 4,000 capsulized articles), and the Wall Street stock index. It also provides "electronic mail," the ability to send and receive messages from other users via the computer.

CompuServe offers similar services through the Videotext terminal, available exclusively from Radio Shack. The terminal receives and decodes messages transmitted over the telephone and then sends the information to the computer. You choose

the information you want to retain by pressing a specified code of numbers and letters on the keyboard. The data is then stored in your computer.

A wide variety of microcomputers are currently on the market to fulfill your personal computing needs. Here is a sampling of the hardware presently available:

APF Imagination Machine—The central unit of this system actually consists of two components which can be purchased separately, an entertainment module and a keyboard console with a built-in cassette drive. Peripherals include a printer, disk drive and telephone modem.

Apple II—Although one of the most expensive of the personal computers, the Apple II is also one of the most versatile. It is a favorite of computer buffs who want to design and sell their own software. Numerous companies currently sell hardware and software for use with the Apple II.

Atari 400 and 800—Either model can be used with the various Atari peripherals. The model 400 is one of the least expensive of the microcomputers but it utilizes a touch-sensitive keyboard panel which is not as easy to work with as the full-key typewriter featured on most personal computers (including the model 800). Two different printers, single and dual disk drives, a cassette drive and a telephone modem are available. An interface module is necessary to connect the modem and printer to the computer.

Mattel Intellivision—Like APF's system, the Intellivision has two primary components: the master component, which is essentially a video game unit, and the keyboard component with a built-in cassette drive. The master component is available now. The keyboard component should be on the market in early 1981. Mattel also plans to offer a printer, telephone modem and voice synthesizer.

Radio Shack TRS-80—Clearly the leader in the microcomputer field in terms of sales, the TRS-80 has probably the widest variety of peripherals and software. But, unlike the other systems listed here, it requires a Radio Shack CRT monitor and cannot be connected to an ordinary television. Its primary appeal is as a small business computer.

Texas Instruments' TI-99/4—Texas Instruments is marketing this

as the "first true home computer." Although this is a dubious claim, it does emphasize the fact that this system is designed for the home rather than the small business market. Peripherals include a disk drive, telephone modem, speech synthesizer and an interface to connect these components to the central unit.

A wide variety of software is available for all these systems. If you decide to buy a home computer, the final choice may rest on the software designed for the system: software intended for one computer system ordinarily is not compatible with other systems (e.g., Atari program cartridges will not work in Mattel's Intellivision).

Of course, all this computer technology has a price. Can you afford it? Central processing units typically cost between \$500 and \$1,200. Disk drives, telephone modems, printers and interface modules for connecting these peripherals to the computer each start at about \$200. So, a home computer capable of performing most of the tricks described here would probably cost at

least \$1,300, not including the price of the television used as a CRT monitor.

If this seems expensive, consider the potential advantages. Computers are already intimately involved in most aspects of our daily lives, from printing pay checks to calculating grocery bills, and it might be helpful to have one on your side for a change. The next time a faceless clerk tells you that "the computer" says your payment is overdue, just reply, "Well, my computer says your computer is wrong." The almost automatic deference bestowed on computers will probably give you at least two months to get the money together before they hit on you again.

And consider the following statistics: Approximately 600,000 personal computers are in use now and an additional 30,000 are sold each month. That means there are a whole lot of people out there with a very powerful tool at their disposal. Although you may think that you cannot afford a home computer, the day may be rapidly approaching when you will not be able to afford to be without one. ■

The next time a faceless clerk tells you "the computer" says your payment is overdue, you can tell him, "My computer says your computer is wrong."



The Atari model 800 offers a full-key typewriter keyboard whereas the model 400 has a pressure sensitive keyboard panel.



The Imagination Machine from APF, showing its mini-floppy disk drive and on-screen print-out.

Newsline

(Continued from page 23)

poration.

The elimination of all the naughty bits will enable the truncated versions of the *Flying Circus* to fit standard television timeslots and allow for the insertion of commercials.

Alas, it is usually the bluer aspects of Monty Python that are the funniest. Edited down, they just won't be the same. Know what I mean, know what I mean?

MINI STATION/MAXI AUDIENCE

A few months back, the Federal Communications Commission proposed opening up the airwaves to what could eventually amount to perhaps thousands of new television stations across the nation. These "mini-stations" would cover areas the size of city neighborhoods or small towns and all without the vast amounts of sending, storage and receiving equipment employed by the current "maxi-stations."

Following on the heels of this proposal is the creation of a new subsidiary of Sears Roebuck's Allstate Insurance Company, the Neighborhood TV Company. The new outfit has already applied for approval to set up 101 new mini-stations.

The proposed stations would operate on the UHF wave band and dot the country from Bangor to Baja. Each station would be equipped with a satellite-signal receptor and would rebroadcast signals from KUSK-TV (Channel 7 in Prescott, Arizona), which would provide a fair fare of comedy, rodeo, country and western music and westerns.

Though the stations themselves might be mini, the combined audience for the 101 of them is not. Assuming the FCC can find it in its heart to approve the plan, better than 65,000,000 people could be tuning in to the new stations.

Several other outfits have likewise submitted requests to start up their own minis, but the Sears plan is by far the most ambitious and wide-ranging to date. Among the others chomping at the mini-bit are three subscription television networks—one of which is an existing network owned by three black former FCC attorneys.

SMOKE 'EM IF YOU GOT 'EM

It has been almost a decade since cigarette advertising was banned from network television and, if the truth be known, there are very few televisioners who actually miss such gems as "Taste me, taste me" and "Show us your Lark" in the middle of their favorite programs. But the Public Broadcasting

Service (PBS) is thinking of bringing some of that back to the tube by accepting sponsorship of some of its programming from cigarette—and liquor—companies.

While this practice is forbidden on commercial television by federal law, PBS is under no such restraints. Indeed, five committees within PBS have come up with varying positions on the subject, both pro and con. But PBS's 35-member coordinating council is expected to hand down their final decision on the matter soon.

The main bone of contention between the various committees is how exactly to view such sponsorship. One group views underwriting as just that—underwriting plain and simple. Others, however, see it as a form of advertising and define that as totally unacceptable.

While PBS does not currently accept underwriting from these companies, it is because of their by-laws and not federal law. A not inconsiderable number of folks at PBS are eager to change this and get a chunk of the money currently set aside by the liquor and cigarette companies for charity and public relations.

PBS will be needing nearly \$30 million next year from business institutions for national programming and another \$12 million for local efforts. It does seem a shame to some at the service to let a good part of those big bucks go up in smoke.

BUT IS IT WORTH IT?

Better late than never, the 1980-81 television season has now been upon us for several months. And almost as suddenly as it began, production for the new season of television programs are about ready to shut down work on this strike-shortened season.

But, shorter season or no, television producers are once again pouring astronomical sums into their product to bring us the usual mix of entertainment, news and drivel. How much does it cost to bring us Jack, Chrissy and Janet or Mike, Morley, Dan and Harry each week? Well, here is a rundown on the approximate costs for single episodes of some of network television's most popular programs.

<i>The Incredible Hulk</i>	\$650,000
<i>The Love Boat</i>	\$650,000
<i>Dukes of Hazzard</i>	\$620,000
<i>Fantasy Island</i>	\$600,000
<i>Lou Grant</i>	\$600,000
<i>M*A*S*H</i>	\$325,000
<i>Bamey Miller</i>	\$300,000
<i>Soap</i>	\$300,000
<i>Mork and Mindy</i>	\$300,000
<i>60 Minutes</i>	\$300,000
<i>NBC Magazine</i>	\$300,000
<i>Laverne and Shirley</i>	\$280,000
<i>WKRP in Cincinnati</i>	\$275,000

FUMBLING ON THE ONE YARD LINE

Once an ongoing court battle is finally settled, the National Football League's long-standing—and hated—local television blackout rule could fall by the wayside.

Under current rules, the NFL is allowed to black out televised broadcasts of football games within 75 miles of the home team's city so they can attract bigger—read: sell-out—crowds at the stadium box office. In practice what this means is that unless a particular game is sold out two days in advance of play, the local fans have to choose between alternative sportsfare, the Three Stooges, or listening to the game on radio.

However, a judge in Florida does not find this practice fair and has set the machinery in motion for a legal challenge.

U.S. District Court Judge James Paines issued an injunction ordering the NFL and the Miami Dolphins to allow CBS affiliate WTVX-TV to broadcast the teams' home games. Even though WTVX is 120 miles north of Miami in Fort Pierce, its signal reaches to within 40 miles of the Miami area.

Actually, it is not the black-out rule itself that Judge Paines objects to. It is the NFL's arbitrary 75-mile limit that he finds objectionable. This, he feels, should be subject to legislation on an area-by-area basis.

The judge also pointed out that cablecasters were allowed, under recent Federal Communications Commission rulings, to import so-called distant signals of home games and deliver them to sports fans within 35 miles of the stadium. This, he says, may be construed as unlawful discrimination against local broadcasters.

The NFL and the Dolphins intercepted Judge Paines' ruling, however, and ran the ball to a three judge federal appeals court in New Orleans for a touchdown. The higher court blocked Paines' injunction, thus allowing the NFL to continue the black-outs.

BUT CAN IT STAND THE COMPETITION WITH CHARLIE'S ANGELS?

Public Broadcasting System President Lawrence Grossman has proposed the formation of a "grand alliance" of public television stations with cultural institutions across the United States. They way Grossman sees it, such an alliance would allow television and culture to "join together in a new nationwide enterprise with professional dance companies, symphony orchestras, opera companies, theater

companies and major museums that abound in our communities."

Grossman wants to see this come about as either a pay television service or a non-pay service with advertising. The project, however, is still in the most embryonic of forms as PBS waits to see how many people salute this run up the flagpole. PBS Executive Vice President Neil Mahler reports some initial contacts with potential participants have been positive.

Among structures being discussed for the highly ambitious project is a for-profit corporation which would, according to Grossman, broadcast productions they felt were "the very best on a national basis," and which would provide "opportunities for local and regional efforts as well."

Just in case all this does come through, you had better get the evening gown or tuxedo out of mothballs.

GOOD NEWS AND . . . GOOD NEWS?

After many long weeks, the strike of Screen Actors Guild and American Federation of Television Artists members is over and, as a result, the rerun season got longer and the upcoming season of new shows has been shortened.

Still, the strike did have a beneficial aspect—thanks to it, anxious viewers were not forced to choose between watching the first installment of *Shogun* or the season premiere of *Dallas* which answered the magical question, *Who Shot J.R.?* And, with *Shogun* running every night that week, we would have also had to decide whether we wanted to see Richard Chamberlain struggle to learn Japanese or learn if Jessica survived on Soap.

But life and death aside, we have not been seeing as much new stuff this year as we have in past seasons since the three networks have ordered a reduction in the number of new episodes of programs on their schedules. Come spring, the series will go into reruns at their usual time—and there won't be as many new programs around to see again . . . and again.

"DOES THIS MEAN WE HAVE TO CUT OUT COFFEE AND DONUTS?"

For you parents in televisionland who have neither the time nor stomach to monitor the flood of programming your children watch daily on the tube, you can always count on the National Parent-Teacher Association to do it for you.

For years, the PTA has issued an annual report on the best and worst of television broadcasting. But now, the organization has run into a bit of



problem in its fight to project good values to children through the tube—a "critical lack of funds" for their year-round monitoring program.

Still, citing parental pressures as well as what they term "new data on the potential dangers to children from television," the PTA has decided to fund the project despite the current fiscal crunch. Part of this year's effort, incidentally, will be a push on the Association's part for an extensive critical viewing skills curriculum for both home and classroom use.

So when the kiddies come home and tell you they have to watch *Three's Company* tonight—relax. They may merely be doing their homework.

TV SETS BIG & SMALL

A BAG OF FISH AND CHIPS, A PINT OF BITTERS AND KOJAK TO GO, PLEASE!

Great Britain seems to have taken hold of the blossoming video revolution and made it its own. While the U.S. lags behind in such areas as teletext and cable, England is forging full steam ahead into the age of television dominance.

It is no big surprise then that England should be the birthplace of yet another video first—the videopub. Much like

this country's dinner theaters where patrons go for a meal and a show, the first such living TV dinner opened recently in Acton, West London as a joint venture between Transworld Communications and the Chef and Brewer pub chain: Tickets sell for the equivalent of \$5.00 and buy you entry into the pub as well as a videocassette screening on a giant eight-foot television screen of recent hit films.

The premiere of this new idea in dining out entertainment went over well with 98 patrons paying the price of admission to the pub's new \$300,000 cinema-section. If the venture continues to be successful, patrons at 10 other locations will be treated to waiters-served eating and drinking along with their television entertainment.

Now you will not have to miss any of the movie when the urge for popcorn—or, in this case, a three-course meal—strikes you.

TELETEXT

THE BRITISH ARE COMING . . . THE BRITISH ARE COMING

These days, Teletext seems to be generating almost as much controversy in government quarters as it does excitement in the private sector. While England, France, Australia and other countries already have their systems in operation, the United States is lagging far behind. That is why the National Association of Broadcasters (NAB) recently demanded that the FCC move quickly in deciding which of the various systems currently available will be adopted for use in this country.

Further delay in choosing, the NAB feels, will result in the proliferation of a myriad of noncompatible systems springing up across the country rather than a single, unified service. The Association is also afraid that its members may beaced out of the lucrative

(Continued on Page 48)

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NEW RELEASES

MAGNETIC VIDEO (tape):

Video Playhouse Series—13 American Film Theatre Classics

Jacques Brel Is Alive and Well and Living in Paris—(1975), musical review with 26 songs sung by Jacques Brel. With Ely Stone, Mort Shuman and Joe Massiel. Directed by Denis Heroux.

The Iceman Cometh—(1973), Lee Marvin, Frederic March, Robert Ryan, Jeff Bridges and Bradford Dillman star in the Eugene O'Neill play about the patrons of a 1912 saloon. Directed by John Frankenheimer.

Three Sisters—(1970), Chekhov's famous story of three daughters of a deceased Russian officer living in the provinces in the early 1900's. Stars Sir Laurence Olivier, Joan Plowright, Alan Bates, Joanne Watts, Louise Purnell and Derek Jacobi. Directed by Olivier and John Sichel.

A Delicate Balance—(1973), Director Tony Richardson's version of Edward Albee's Pulitzer Prize winning play about a neurotic Connecticut family. Stars Katherine Hepburn, Paul Scofield, Lee Remick, Kate Reid, Joseph Cotten and Betsy Blair.

The Homecoming—(1973), Harold Pinter's tale of a man long away from his family who returns with a wife. Stars Cyril Cusack, Ian Holm, Michael Jayston and Terence Rigby. Directed by Peter Hall.

Galileo—(1973), Bertolt Brecht's retelling of Galileo's struggles with the Church stars John Gielgud, Georgia Brown and Clive Revill. Directed by John Losey.

The Man In The Glass Booth—(1975), Maximilian Schell plays a Nazi war criminal on trial. Directed by Arthur Hiller.

Rhinoceros—(1974), Eugene Ionesco's absurdist treatment of a clerk who refuses to conform by turning into a rhino. Stars Zero Mostel, Gene Wilder, Karen Black, Robert Weil, Joe Silver, Marilyn Chris and Robert Fields. Directed by Tom O'Horgan.

Luther—(1974), from the John Osborn play about the founder of the Reformation, starring Stacy Keach, Patrick McGee, Hugh Griffith, Robert Stephens and Alan Badel. Directed by Guy Green.

Lost in the Stars—(1974), film version of the Kurt Weill/Maxwell Anderson musical based on Alan Paton's famous book, *Cry The Beloved Country*. Stars Brock Peters, Melba Moore, Raymond St. Jacques, Clifton Davis and Paula Kelly. Directed by Daniel Mann.

In Celebration—(1974), the story of one night in an English mining town and a family reunion that gets ugly. Starring Alan Bates and directed by Lindsay Anderson.

The Maids—(1975), Jean Genet's tale of a love/hate relationship between two maids and their mistress. Glenda Jackson, Susannah York, Vivian Merchant and Mark Burns star. Directed by Christopher Miles.

Philadelphia Here I Come—(1975), Brian Friel's story of a young man's interior debate about whether or not he should leave Ireland for the United States. Stars Donal McCann, Des Cave, Siobhan McKenna and Eamon Kelly. Directed by John Quedd.

Julia—(1977), Jane Fonda, Hal Holbrook, Vanessa Redgrave, Jason Robards, Maximilian Schell and Meryl Streep star in Lillian Hellman's story of the author's

unusual friendship with Julia and their involvement in the anti-Nazi resistance of the 1930s. Directed by Andrew L. Stone.

The Turning Point—(1977), the reunion of two friends, one a ballerina, the other a former ballerina who gave up her career, stunningly performed by Anne Bancroft, Shirley MacLaine and Mikhail Baryshnikov. Directed by Herbert Ross.

Summer 3—(1980), Farrah Fawcett, Kirk Douglas and Harvey Keitel star in this British space opera directed by Stanley Donen.

Phantasm—(1979), Michael Baldwin, Bill Thornbury and Reggie Bannister deal with a flying object that murders folks by puncturing their heads. Directed by Don Coscarelli.

The Killing of Sister George—(1968), a frank exploration of lesbianism starring Beryl Reid, Susannah York, Coral Brown, Ronald Fraser and Patricia Medina. Directed by Robert Aldrich.

Take the Money and Run—(1969), Woody Allen's first film which he wrote, directed, and starred, about a compulsive thief. With Janet Margolin, Marcel Hillaire and Jacquelyn Hyde.

Kotch—(1971), comedy with Walter Matthau, Deborah Winters and Felicia Farr about an old man who doesn't want to be put in a nursing home by his children. Jack Lemmon makes his directorial debut.

Lovers and Other Strangers—(1970), a young couple gets married with some funny family reverberations. Stars Gig Young, Bea Arthur, Anne Jackson and Cloris Leachman. Directed by Cy Howard.

Song of Norway—(1970), film about the life and work of Composer Edvard Grieg, with Edward G. Robinson, Florence Henderson and Robert Morley. Directed by Andrew L. Stone.

Notorious—(1946), Alfred Hitchcock's classic WWII spy suspense thriller with Cary Grant, Ingrid Bergman and Claude Rains.

Rebecca—(1940), another Hitchcock thriller, this the Oscar winning film based on Daphne du Maurier's story of a girl living in the shadow of her English nobleman husband's former wife. With Laurence Olivier, Joan Fontaine, George Sanders, Nigel Bruce and Judith Anderson.

Sensuous Nurse—(1979), R-rated tale of a rich old man who suffers a heart attack. His relatives attempt to finish him off by hiring a statuesque Swiss nurse but she grows fond of her patient and turns the tables. Starring Ursula Andress and Jack Palance.

The Fog—(1979), John Carpenter's contemporary tale of supernatural horror starring Hal Holbrook, Adrienne Barbeau, Jamie Lee Curtis, Janet Leigh and John Houseman.

All That Jazz—(1980), Writer/Director Bob Fosse's semi-autobiographical musical about a choreographer/movie director who burns the candle at both ends, starring Roy Scheider, Jessica Lange and Ben Vereen. The first videocassette to release gold.

Movie Movie—(1978), contemporary parody of 1930s movies, with George C. Scott, Trish Van Devere, Eli Wallach, Red Buttons and Art Carney. Directed by Stanley Donen.

Autumn Sonata—(1978), Ingmar Bergman's story of a concert pianist and his daughter reunited after seven years. With Liv Ullmann, Lena Nyman, Halvar Bjork and Gunnar Bjornstrand.

Miracle on 34th Street—(1947), in which the question, "Is there really a Santa Claus?" is at last answered. Fine performances by Maureen O'Hara, John Payne, Edmund Gwenn, Gene Lockhart and Natalie Wood. George Seaton, Director.

Laura—(1944), Gene Tierney, Dana Andrews, Clifton Webb and Vincent Price star in Otto Preminger's classic murder mystery.

A Letter to Three Wives—(1948), the town hussy runs off with the husband of one of three women to whom she writes letters. With Jeanne Crain, Linda Darnell, Ann Southern, Kirk Douglas and Paul Douglas. Directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz.

PARAMOUNT (tape):

Star Trek—The Movie—(1979), the old television crew is back in this \$40 million space extravaganza, with William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy and DeForest Kelley. Directed by Robert Wise.

American Gigolo—(1980), seamy morality play and last year's box office hit about the goings-on of women who pay men for their attention. Starring Richard Gere and Lauren Hutton. Directed by Paul Schrader.

Bon Voyage, Charlie Brown—(1980), another in a series of everyone's favorite comic strip character. Directed by Bill Melendez.

Little Darlings—(1980), Tatum O'Neal and Kristy McNichol portray two 15-year-olds in competition to lose their virginity. Directed by Ronald F. Maxwell.

Starting Over—(1979), Burt Reynolds, Jill Clayburgh and Candice Bergen star in this comedy of a divorced man who falls in love while still haunted by his ex-wife. Directed by Alan J. Pakula.

Downhill Racer—(1969), Robert Redford stars in this fine story of an egotistical member of the U.S. Olympic Ski Team. Co-stars Gene Hackman, Camilla Sparv and Karl Michael Vogler. Directed by Michael Ritchie.

Don't Look Now—(1973), British occult thriller based on the Daphne du Maurier story about the parents of a drowned child and their terrifying visit to Venice, starring Donald Sutherland, Julie Christie and Hilary Mason. Directed by Nicolas Roeg.

COLUMBIA PICTURES HOME ENTERTAINMENT

Close Encounters of the Third Kind—The Special Edition—(1980), this slightly updated version of the 1977 hit includes several minutes of footage not included in the original. Starring Richard Dreyfuss, Francois Truffaut, Teri Garr, Melinda Dillon, Cary Guffey and Bob Balaban. Directed by Steven Spielberg.

SPECIAL CLOSE-CAPTIONED EDITIONS (tape):

Chapter Two—(1979), Neil Simon's autobiographical comedy involving a writer who is drawn into a new love affair before he's really recovered from his wife's death.

Starring James Caan, Marsha Mason, Valerie Harper, Joseph Bologna. Directed by Robert Moore.

The China Syndrome—(1979), Jane Fonda, Jack Lemmon and Michael Douglas uncover a Three-Mile Island-style nuclear accident. Directed by James Bridges.

KARL VIDEO COMPANY (tape):

Video First Aid Kit—(1980), a one-hour primer on the basics: how to read symptoms, procedures to follow in emergencies: including the Heimlich Maneuver, fractures and sprains, hyperventilation, head injuries, and much more.

ASTROIDEO, INC. (tape):

World Championship Tennis Series featuring tennis pros Bjorn Borg, John McEnroe, Vitas Gerulaitis, Arthur Ashe, Jimmy Connors, Tracy Austin, Chris Evert-Lloyd, Martina Navratilova. Films in the series are: **Davis Cup Series, 1977, Tennis "Fever" Series, 1977, Volvo International, Gator Fever, Robert F. Kennedy Pro-Celebrity Tennis Tournament, 1979, United States Open Clay Court Tennis Championship.**

FOTOMAT (tape):

Benji—(1974), filmdom's favorite dog helps capture the kidnappers of two children, with Peter Breck, Deborah Walley, Edgar Buchanan, Frances Vavie and Patsy Garrett. Directed by Joe Camp.

For the Love of Benji—(1977), this time Benji is chased through the streets of Athens by secret agents trying to get the secret formula tattooed on his paw. Stars Patsy Garrett, Cynthia Smith, Allen Fuzat.

Benji At Work/The Phenomenon of Benji—(1980), two special behind-the-scenes look at how they get Benji to do all those wonderful stunts.

HAWMPISI—(1976), Slim Pickens, Jack Elam and James Hampton star in this comedy about camels trained as army mounts in the Texas desert. Directed by Joe Camp.

MCA DISTRIBUTING CORPORATION (videodisc)

The Touch of Love—(1980), a demonstration of the art of massage, with a dual track, one with instruction, the other with accompanying music; after the user learns the techniques, he or she can just have the music on.

RCA SELECTAVISION (disc)

Eat to the Beat—(1980), finally released after being blocked by litigation, this rocker stars the rock group Blondie, with side A the album and side B rounded off with five songs. Mono only.

The Grateful Dead—(1980), a concert film by the rock group of the same name, including over 20 musical numbers. Mono only.

As We Grow—(1980), a 70-minute 12-episode program aimed at children, covering such areas as growth, self-awareness, family history and tradition.

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41 more ways to turn your living room into an arcade

Part Two of a SERIES by Paul Kupperberg

Oh, the games people play. Used to be that the simple pair of dice and the humble deck of cards were all that was necessary to provide mankind with eons of entertainment. The board game was a welcome addition to our pleasures, not to mention our game playing versatility. Chess, checkers and backgammon ruled our fun down through the centuries.

When computers first hit the scene in the late 1940s they were toys for the scientists only. We would have to wait a couple of decades for our turn.

But when the "miracle chip," the microcomputer finally did become available on the consumer market it insured that game playing would never again be the same.

The games and toys that are a product of that electronic marvel are remarkable. Each year of this new electronic age brings with it technological leaps and bounds that are nothing short of incredible. Consider, when digital calculators first went on sale a little more than a decade back, they were large and

bulky, cost in the neighborhood of several hundred dollars and could add, subtract, multiply and divide. Today, a calculator the size of a business card has all those functions, as well as memory and several higher mathematical abilities.

And even the miniature calculator may soon be obsolete, since it is now possible to have a whole, fully functional computer in your own home.

That is where games come in. Take any one of the many home computers, hook it up to your television set, snap in a cartridge and you are ready to play just about any game that technology can provide. Atari, Bally, Mattel, Texas Instruments, Magnavox and Radio Shack are just a few of the companies offering home computers, ranging in price from under \$150 for a simple game-playing unit, to over \$2000 for a bona fide full-fledged computer. Pong may have started it all, but today it is little better than an idiot second cousin compared to

what you can now play on your home video screen.

Hand-held electronic games have also come a long way in a short time, and though limited by size, many still manage to put those silicon chips quite handily through their paces. From the deepest depths of the sea to the highest heights of outer space, from the playing field to the playing board, electronic games are where it's at. In fact, if you can think of a game not available on any of the numerous systems, just be patient. You can be sure they will get around to it sooner or later.

This is intended as a guide to home video computer and hand-held electronic games, though it is by no means complete. In it, however, we will attempt to list the best and most innovative (in our opinion) of those currently available, along with the manufacturer's suggested retail price. Be aware that one company's game cartridge will fit only that same company's home video computer.

And be aware as well that batteries, as ever, are not included.

ALPINE SKIING

(Magnavox, \$20.00): Whoosh! It's world class championship skiing at its electronic best, courtesy of Magnavox's Odyssey 2 home computer. While the graphics on the screen are no great shakes, the features almost make up for it. One or two players can compete on the Slalom, the Giant Slalom and the ever-popular Downhill races. Repetition is no problem with this game—the computer is able to generate over 195,000 different ski runs, as well as clock your Jean-Claude Kelley act to 1/10 of a second.

AUTO RACING

(Mattel, \$30.00). Around the last lap, it's Mattel Electronics Intellivision and *Auto Racing*. The object of this game is to drive as fast as you can along computer generated courses—without hitting any of the numerous obstacles placed in your path. Potholes, obstructions and hazards can pop up at any moment as you compete against the timer. Don't forget to fasten your little electronic seatbelts!

BACKGAMMON CHALLENGER

(Fidelity Electronics, hand-held, \$99.00): Take a regular old-fashioned backgammon game board, attach a small computer to its side and you've got Fidelity Electronics' *Backgammon Challenger*. While the human member of the game handles the die and moves the pieces around the board, the computer calculates its moves and announces them to you via a digital readout. A small keyboard allows you to enter the moves into the memory for later recall. *Backgammon Challenger's* computer is just like playing a human opponent, except it doesn't chortle while it's winning.

BOXING

(Mattel, \$30.00): While we're still in the "b's", I think it should be known that I harbor a strong prejudice towards exciting and imaginative visuals in electronic games. *Boxing* by Mattel has them. Two realistic looking boxer-blips bob and weave around a ring under a spotlight. Points are scored for punches and knockdowns while a timer keeps track of the rounds. There's even a little clanger-blip in the corner that rings the rounds in and out.

BRIDGE CHALLENGER

(Fidelity, hand-held, \$370.00): It's hard to know where to begin with this one. First of all, *Bridge Challenger*

talks to you while you play, letting you hear its bids while it plays against one, two or three human challengers. The computer is programmed with all the conventional bridge rules and bidding systems. It can read custom-made playing cards with an optical scanner, keep you informed of scores through a moving message display and make sandwiches. Well, not really, but considering all the above mentioned features and a good many not mentioned, the next generation of *Bridge Challenger* just might be able to manage it.

BRIDGEMASTER

(Tryon, hand-held, \$399.00): While



TRYON'S CHESS TRAVELLER

Tryon's portable *Bridgmaster* may not talk while it plays, it still offers a challenging game to both beginner and pro alike. It features a digital readout, optical scanner for specially encoded playing cards, audio feedback, most major playing conventions in its computer memory and can function as either partner or opponent, as well as instructor. The only disadvantage *Bridgmaster* has as a partner is that you can't kick it under the table when it makes a stupid bid.

CANYON BOMBER

(Atari, \$21.95): Feeling hostile? Want to relieve that tension by blasting something to bits? Try *Canyon Bomber* by Atari, the game that allows you to compete against the computer or another player in bombing obstacles from a high-flying airplane. Six game selections allow you to destroy objects on the ground while the remaining two selections on the cartridge give you the opportunity to blow up ships, tankers and carriers in the water in *Sea Bomber* games on the same cartridge.

CHECKER CHALLENGER

(Fidelity, hand-held, \$65.00): An-

other of Fidelity's computerized game boards, this time taking on the ever popular checkers. *Checker Challenger* operates on two levels of difficulty, can play either offense or defense, and use random responses to moves that vary with every game.

CHESS CHALLENGER

(Fidelity, \$110.00—\$325.00): Fidelity offers not one but three versions of computerized chess boards: *Chess Challenger 7*, *Sensory Chess Challenger* and *Voice Chess Challenger*. The standard version of the game features seven levels of skill, from beginner to expert and can do everything a human opponent can do, including play against itself. *Sensory Chess Challenger* does everything the first model does, except you do not have to punch your move into a computer keyboard: the board "sees" your move with sensors implanted in the board. And *Voice Chess Challenger* is undisputedly at the top of the computerized chess heap—not only is it one of the most advanced chess computers on the market, but it can also talk to you, using accepted game terminology, in four languages. So whether you play in English, German, French or Spanish, you can keep up with this incredible game.

CHESS TRAVELER

(Tryon, hand-held, \$99.99): Have chess game, will travel—with seven levels of skill, no less. While you move the pieces on the board, the computer plots its strategy and gives you its moves on the readout. What more can we say about chess that has not all ready been said?

CONCENTRATION

(Atari, \$21.95): Remember the old *Concentration* television gameshow, where contestants had to match pictures hidden behind numbered cards? Well, that's the name of this game. *Hunt & Score* is the first four selections with you playing against another person or the computer in matching up eight pairs of objects. *Advanced Hunt & Score* ups the ante to 15 different pairs of objects, a surefire brain twister. So tell our player what he's won, Don Pardo!

COSMIC CONFLICT

(Magnavox, \$20.00): I am also a sucker for any video game set in outer space, especially one that puts the player into the pilot seat. *Cosmic Conflict* fits the bill. The player is faced with enemy transports, battle frigates and star fighters streaking across the screen, through a laser sight which you line up to blast the

nasty aliens. Star fighters pop unexpectedly in from hyperspace, an on-screen warning flashes when the enemy is near and you even get messages from Star Command while the fighting is in progress. With lots of flashy special effects and weird sounds, *Cosmic Conflict* is lots of fun.

DELUXE FOOTBALL

(Tiger Electronics, hand-held, \$40.00): Football fans will not go hungry in the wide world of video sports, and some of the best eatin' in the hand-held market can be found in *Deluxe Football* from Tiger Electronics. One or two players can mix it up on a clear field, with red and green LEDs indicating the two teams. There is also offensive and defensive play selection—with nine different skill levels—coin flip, fumble and kick return, complete scoring, sound effects, an instant replay option and even a half time show. What other game allows you to go for the potato chips and beer?

FLAG CAPTURE

(Atari, \$21.95): It's the old summer camp favorite gone electronic! *Flag Capture* presents the player with a map made up of dozens of squares, under one of which is hidden a flag. You send out scouts who try to dig up clues to the location, which come in the form of arrows and numbers indicating direction and moves. You can also get yourself blown up by digging up a bomb, but life is short anyway. Ten game selections give



CONCENTRATION by ATARI

the player a wide variety of difficulties and obstacles.

HUNT THE WUMPUS

(Texas Instruments, \$24.95): Believe it or not, the wumpus is a dangerous creature. And believe it or not, you can hunt down a wumpus of your very own with Texas Instruments' *Hunt the Wumpus* home video game. The TI Home Computer sets up a maze of underground caverns through which clues are scattered as to the whereabouts of the wumpus. Deductive reasoning should take you successfully through the maze, although a coward's option allows you to fire ahead into the darkened maze—just in case a nasty wumpus lurks yonder. One last question: where does a wumpus sleep?

INVADERS FROM HYPERSPACE

(Magnavox, \$20.00): The action is fast and furious as the computer generates the aforementioned *Invaders from Hyperspace* to destroy



KENNER'S LIVE ACTION FOOTBALL

you and everything else they happen to hit. Not that you are defenseless—your ship, as well as the ship of the second player (should there be one) have the regulation laser-blasters we have all come to know and love. Be the first kid on your block to save the universe.

LAS VEGAS ROULETTE

(Mattel, \$30.00): When it comes to what we see on the screen, Mattel is right at the top and *Las Vegas Roulette* is no exception. Against a green "felt" background, this home video cartridge recreates the roulette betting field where you place your electronic wagers while a digital readout keeps track of money, et al. Then the roulette wheel spins on the screen and the "croupier" announces the results. Win or lose, be ready to let the chips blip where they may.

LCD CHESS BOARD

(Tryom, \$275.00): If you happen to own a Tryom Master Unit computer then you are in for some interesting play with the *LCD Chess Board*. Electronic images of the playing pieces are displayed on the LCD board, moving instantly to correspond to the moves the player punches into the computer. The master unit itself is programmed with all the rules and regs of the game and will even suggest the best move for you.

LIVE ACTION FOOTBALL

(Kenner, hand-held, \$45.00): The visuals on hand-held electronic games are often, by necessity, limited in style and appeal. Not so Kenner's *Live Action Football*. Along with sound effects ranging from the National Anthem at the start of the game to fight songs to whistles come the neatest little football players and football that, though more or less stationary, go through all the moves in multi-action. With all this swell action comes all the needed scoring, nine skill levels, one or two player option and good control over the playing figures. Score a

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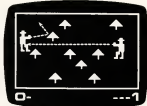
It isn't so much a question of a better screen or a better lens. AQUASTAR is at least equal to its competitors in these areas. The real difference in AQUASTAR is its light production. Its exciting technologically advanced system gives more light for the best picture; flexibility in screen size and shape; smaller projector size and weight for easier handling ... AND the lowest price-per-lumen on the market.

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OMAR by TRYOM



SHOWDOWN IN 2100 A.D.
by MAGNAVOX

PLAYMAKER,
offering hockey,
soccer and
basketball in one
hand-held unit is
probably the most
sports you can get
for the money.

touchdown and that little sucker will even do a victory dance and spike the ball!

MIND CHALLENGERS

(Texas Instruments, \$24.95): Once you are done hunting the wumpus, you may want to turn your TI Home Computer to *Mind Changers*, two interesting games in one cartridge. Game I takes on one or two players by generating a series of electronic notes which the player must echo. If you really want to find out how smart you are, try following the sequence to the end of its progressive route—64 notes. Game II gets a little tougher still and maybe that is why up to eight can play it. The computer coughs up up to 16 color/shape code combinations for the player to break simultaneously. Aspinin not included.

NIGHT DRIVER

(Atari, \$21.95): Your car speeds along the dark and winding road where anything might happen and probably will—provided the computer is programmed for it. The object of the game is to go as fast as you can for as long as you can without hitting the various and sundry whatever that the computer throws at you.

OMAR I, II, III, IV, V

(Tryom, hand-held, \$39.95—\$89.95): If at least one of the hand-held Omar units by Tryom does not give you what you are after in backgammon then you are probably playing a game that don't exist! The various Omar's—named after celebrity/endorser Omar Sharif—are strategy/opponent computers with the physical play done on regular backgammon boards, all to the tune of the latest international rules and regulations of play. Would Omar Sharif try to cheat you?

OUT OF THIS WORLD/ HELICOPTER RESCUE

(Magnavox, \$20.00): Have an itch to test the old speed and agility?

The first game on this Magnavox cartridge, *Out of This World*, gives you the chance—and in outer space to boot. One or two players detach their spacelanders from the orbiting mothership and attempt a landing in the shortest possible time, using a set amount of fuel for the thrusters which you fire. Then, with the mothership suddenly changing speed and direction, you blast off and attempt a link-up. Variety comes in the form of a trio of different gravity fields, simulating conditions on Jupiter, Mars and the moon. *Helicopter Rescue* is a more sedate, down-to-earth variation on the above mentioned theme. One or two players have to rescue as many little electronic people as they can within two minutes from a rooftop where disaster is about to strike.

PLAYMAKER

(Tiger, hand-held, \$40.00): Much in the style of the Tiger *Deluxe Football*, *Playmaker* offers three more popular sports games in one hand-held unit. Hockey, soccer or basketball can be played with the mere change of playing field insert, using the same controls to maneuver the LED player blips for one or two players on any one of the nine skill levels. *Playmaker* is probably the most video sports you can get for the money.

POCKET BILLIARDS

(Magnavox, \$20.00): No need to hang out in pool halls anymore, not with *Pocket Billiards*. Play alone or with a friend at eight ball or rotation pool. The electronic pool cue is fully in your control, able to rotate 360 degrees to knock any ball into any pocket with anything from a grand slam to a light tap. The computer takes care of the tedious chores of racking and scoring and accompanies the play with the authentic clack of colliding balls.

RACEWAY

(Tiger, hand-held, \$25.00): Another nice one from Tiger, *Raceway* pits

you against the electronic unit in a race against time. You have 99 seconds to speed through as many laps as you can while steering clear of the cars controlled by the computer. My favorite feature of *Raceway* is the controls—a small steering wheel allows you to change lanes and a tiny gearshift gives you control over speed. Sound effects add a nice touch with the roar of engines to spur you along.

RED LINE

(Kenner, hand-held, \$40.00): Though *Red Line* is a hand-held game for one, players can compete with one another with a special hook-up between two units. The game starts with a push of a button and from there you are in control of speed, gearshift and engine revolutions. To the accompaniment of engine sounds and squealing tires, you try for the best possible time and speed without blowing your engine. *Red Line* is an easy game to get a grip on.

ROCKET PINBALL

(Tiger, hand-held, \$30.00): Hey, all you pinball wizards, save those quarters—*Rocket Pinball* is here! An electronic blip scoots hither and thither across a colorful and surprisingly feature-filled game field, complete with bumpers and scoring lights and two types of flipper action. A digital readout keeps tabs on the score of your five balls per play—as well as any extra balls you may happen to win in the course of the action. You also get seven skill levels of play for one or two players.

SHOWDOWN IN 2100 A.D.

(Magnavox, \$20.00): Well—the concept may be stretching things a mite, but the intention, if not the action, of *Showdown in 2100 A.D.* is fine indeed. One or two players can shoot in three types of competition, with all manner of obstacles to get in your futuristic gunfighter's way. Do they have a boot hill on Alpha Centuria?



REDLINE by KENNER



SOCCER by TEXAS INSTRUMENTS

SKIING

(Mattel, \$30.00): Slalom like a pro in the warmth and comfort of your own home with Mattel's *Skiing* cartridge. Once more superior graphics place the Mattel version of this sport at the top of the list. Realistic figures shush down the mountain on a field of snow, dodging obstacles at your command, making their way past lovely evergreens. The number of courses are limited only by the computer's programming. And you never need worry about having a good powder again.

SLOT RACERS

(Atari, \$21.95): 36—count 'em—36 selections on this Atari cartridge. *Slot Racers* puts you in the middle of a murderous maze, pursued by a hostile racer trying to blast you with its bazooka before you blast it. Difficulty options range from missiles that go faster than the cars to cars that go faster than the missiles to missiles that don't corner unless you take control. Just try to avoid getting a speeding ticket.

SOCCER

(Texas Instruments, \$29.95): An attractive 3-dimensional playing field highlights TI's *Soccer*, which features the game of the same name at its electronic best. One or two players can go at it, dribbling, passing, kicking, fouling and penalty included, as well as instant replay after goals. It may not be in the same league as the wumpus, but it is fun nonetheless.

SPACE INVADER/ GONE FISHING

(Tiger, hand-held, \$15.00): For the younger set, *Space Invader* and *Gone Fishing* can still be enjoyed by the older generation. This hand-held unit allows them to either blast spaceships or, with a simple change of the playing field card, hook the computerized version of *Moby Dick*. Scoring on this one, by the way, is

manual. The kiddies may as well learn how to count while they are having their fun.

STAR WARS ELECTRONIC BATTLE COMMAND

(Kenner, hand-held, \$34.00): With any luck—and the help of the Force—it won't take you long to get the hang of the *Star Wars Electronic Battle Command*. From one to four players can participate on any one of three skill levels, with a teaching mode for each level. The players move around the unit attempting to locate and destroy enemy Tie-Fighters, all the while having to contend with obstructing planets, wrinkles in the fabric of space and black holes. Show that nasty old Darth Vader that he don't scare you none.

SUB CHASE/ ARMORED ENCOUNTER

(Magnavox, \$20.00): Arm the depth chargers, boys, we're going after them. Two players control the jets and submanned that flash across the screen, complete with sounds for all the explosions and missiles. Time and score is watched diligently by the computer. *Armored Encounter*, the second game on the cart, gives two players an even dozen variations on the old tank-versus-tank-in-a-maze routine.

SUB WARS

(Tiger, hand-held, \$30.00): Innovative packaging adds spice to *Sub Wars*. Tiger's hand-held electronic target game. Periscope handles protrude from the sides of the unit and target blips race across the screen at different speeds and distances for you to torpedo out of existence. Features include digital scoring and time keeping, four skill levels for two players and sonar sound effects.

TAKE THE MONEY AND RUN

(Magnavox, \$20.00): At last, a home video game for economics-junkies! You and an opponent are trapped in "an electronic labyrinth of more

than one trillion economic mazes," with a pair of androids that you can either collaborate with or oppose, depending on your strategy. Mere words are not enough to describe *Take the Money and Run*—unless, of course, you happen to be John Kenneth Galbraith.

THUNDERBALL

(Magnavox, \$20.00): Pinball on the home screen for up to four players, with everything you need to feel like you are hanging out in the local arcade. Non-stop beeping and buzzing keep things interesting as you keep your ball in play with the thumper bumpers and shifting flippers. Other features include roving rebound blocks, bonus bumpers and digital scoring. No relation to the James Bond movie.

VIDEO CHESS

(Texas Instruments, \$69.95): If you happen to run across a chess playing wumpus in your hunt you will be ready with TI's *Video Chess*. The board appears on the screen with facsimile chess pieces that move at the command of one or two players, while the computer stores all moves for complete replay later on if desired. This cartridge also has a great cop-out option: in case you are not up to playing against the computer's normal, aggressive or passive playing modes, you can always switch to a losing mode. When it comes to man against machine, man will always win—provided he can even up the game a little by telling it to lose.

VIDEO GAMES I

(Texas Instruments, \$29.95): You won't find any wild wumpuses here, but you will have a good time in spite of that. *Video Games I* features a variety of games, including *Pot-Shot*, a target shooting game with cute little electronic bunnies, duckies and deer as targets; *Pinball*, and *Doodle*, where you try to trap your opponent in a colorful electronic maze. Lights, music and sound effects keep everybody on their toes.

VOLLEYBALL

(Magnavox, \$20.00): Two six-man teams take the screen, and the volleyball action is about to commence. One or two can play, passing the ball among players on one team before spiking it over the net. Digital scoring keeps track of the score for you while volleyball sound effects keeps things interesting. The only difference between Magnavox's *Volleyball* and the real thing at the beach is that the electronic player-blips don't jiggle. ■

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See Page 71 for more information.

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The Adventurers of Sherlock Holmes. 64. Smarter Brother. 64. Cheech & Chong's Next Movie. 65. Marathon Man. 66. The Longest Day. 67. The Green Berets. 68. The Bugs Bunny/Roadrunner Movie. 69. East of Eden. 70. Rebel Without a Cause. 71. The Searchers. 72. Woodstock I. 73. Woodstock II. 74. Mister Roberts. 75. A Little Romance. 76. Flavors of China. 77. "One For the Road". 78. The Kinks. 79. The Main Event. 79. The Candidate. 80. Exorcist II—The Heretic. 81. Dog Day Afternoon. 82. Executive Action. 83. Bonnie & Clyde. 84. Bullitt. 85. Going in Style. 86. Life of Brian. 87. Every Which Way But Loose. 88. A Clockwork Orange. 89. Summit of '92. 90. Kluge. 91. Golda. 92. Pet's Dragon. 93. The Black Hole. 94. The Love Bug. 95. Escape to Witch Mountain. 96. Davy Crockett—King of the Wild Frontier. 97. 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea. 98. Bedknobs and Broomsticks. 99. The North Avenue Inquiries. 100. The Apple Dumpling Gang. 101. Hot Lead and Cold Feet. 102. On Vacation with Mickey Mouse and Friends. 103. Kids in Kids. 104. The Adventures of Chip 'n' Dale. 105. Ben Hur. 106. 2001: A Space Odyssey. 107. Dr. Zhivago. 108. Meet Me in St. Louis. 109. An American in Paris. 110. The Enchantment. 111. The Dirty Dozen. 112. A Night at the Opera. 113. Adam's Rib. 114. Jailhouse Rock. 115. Network. 116. Coma. 117. The Fog. 118. Blow Up. 119. Straws Dogs. 120. Gussie. 121. The Nutcracker. 122. E.L.O. at Wembley. 123. Wizard of Oz. 124. Omen Field. 125. Breaking Away. 126. Jutra. 127. Corned Knowledge. 128. An Unmarried Woman. 129. A Touch of Class. 130. Capricorn One. 131. Heartbreak Hotel. 132. The Rose. 133. The Turning Point. 134. The Eagle Has Landed. 135. The Casanova Cravings. 136. Sleuth. 137. The Producers. 138. Animal Crackers. 139. Psycho. 140. Jesus Christ Superstar. 141. Dracula (1931). 142. Frankenstein. 143. My Little Chickadee. 144. State of Union. 145. Surface. 146. All That Jazz. 147. Loretta Lynn Concert. 148. The Births. 149. Freney. 150. Duck Soup—Mars Bros. 151. Jaws 2. 152. Dracula (1979). 153. The Seduction of Joe Tynan. 154. The Song. 155. American Graffiti. 156. Battleground Galactica. 157. Slip Shot. 158. Same Time, Next Year. 159. Which Way Was Up? 160. Cool Miner's Daughter. 161. Bad News Bears. 162. Breakfast at Tiffany's. 163. Charlotte's Web. 164. Days of Heaven. 165. Escape from Alcatraz. 166. Emmanuelle. The Joys of a Woman. 167. Gung Ho. 168. Gunfight at OK Corral. 169. Islands in the Stream. 170. King Kong. 171. King of the Gypsies. 172. Lady Sings the Blues. 173. The Little Prince. 174. Looking for Mr. Goodbar. 175. Love Story. 176. Malicious. 177. Mandingo. 178. Nashville. 179. North Dallas Forty. 180. The Odd Couple. 181. Paper Moon. 182. Play It Again, Sam. 183. Playboys. 184. Pretty Baby. 185. Race For Your Life, Charlie Brown. 187. Romeo & Juliet. 188. Shane. 189. Star Trek Series. 190. The Shootout. 191. Three Days of the Condor. 192. Sunset Blvd. 193. Ten Commandments. 194. True Grit. 195. War of the Worlds. 196. Bloodline. 197. Catch 22. 198. Hustle. 199. Lip Stick. 200. Slaughter. 201. The Warriors. 202. Saturday Night Fever. 203. Duckman. 204. Fast Love. 205. The Man Who Shot Liberty Bells. 206. Sliding 17. 207. Easy Come, Easy Go. 208. The Anderson Tapes. 209. Born Free. 210. Born Yesterday. 211. Breakout. 212. Bye Bye Birdie. 213. Don't Rave the Bridge. 214. The River. 215. Fun With Dick & Jane. 216. Gold. 216. The Hard They Fall. 217. The Healer. 218. The Healer. 219. The Healer. 220. The Healer. 221. The Healer. 222. The Healer. 223. The Healer. 224. The Healer. 225. The Healer. 226. The Healer. 227. The Healer. 228. The Healer. 229. The Healer. 230. The Healer. 231. The Healer. 232. The Healer. 233. The Healer. 234. The Healer. 235. The Healer. 236. The Healer. 237. The Healer. 238. The Healer. 239. The Healer. 240. The Healer. 241. The Healer. 242. The Healer. 243. The Healer. 244. The Healer. 245. The Healer. 246. The Healer. 247. 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the New Animation

A Rediscovered Frontier

MICKEY MOUSE, Bugs Bunny and the Flintstones are becoming part of television's ancient history.

The new video technology—cable, tape and discs—is creating opportunities for young animators to show the world there is more to their craft than what has been traditionally available. While filmmakers have been talking about using this technology to broaden their creative horizons, these new-wave cartoon makers have been out there doing it. The revolution has started, and the revolutionaries are using pen, brush and cable.

Animation, a struggling art for 30 years, is being quietly revived around the world. The soul of the cartoon, those movies that first broke through the fuzzy locus of our childhood, is still alive and well. This may be news to you, because the machinery that brought us the cartoons (and newsreels and the Three Stooges) was unplugged by television. Only now is it being re-started by tireless, unsung independent animators.

Today's audience and the new generation of animators take animation as a given. We have all grown up on Hollywood's finest cartoons—a worldwide television staple.

Television also passes huge quantities of counterfeit goods, the worst of new animation. It is awful to look at, but it sells the cereal and employs hundreds of animators. It also

makes the good stuff look even better: commercials for Levis, Mobil, Xerox and Bic pens beautifully mainstream techniques that were avant-garde ten years ago.

The young graphic artist or filmmaker who would like to make good cartoons faces a few, grim choices. The independent animator rejects the studio features, commercials and kid shows to make films that will grab him like the old cartoons could. As it is practically impossible to duplicate the grand old style, they try a hundred new ones.

Animation offers the most freedom to an artist. Each frame is drawn, sculpted, or otherwise thoughtfully prepared, frame by frame by tedious frame—over 1,400 per minute of final running time. The animator is not a slave to images found in real life, and technique is the only limit to the imagination.

The lone ranger of filmmaking, the independent animator typically works

ARTICLE by
John Robert Tebbel and Martha Thomases



alone hunched over the drawing board day and night. There is no need to get up early Monday but no reason to stop at five or take the weekend off. Attempts to laithon an animator's lifestyle by asking, "What do you do on your day off?" are met with an overwrought giggle.

Their art is very personal. There are no actors or other scapegoats. What they create is what gets filmed is what gets shown. Love me, love my film.

Everyone loved Walt Disney. He perfected the classy, commercial cartoon, his mouse and Warners' rabbit defining the American cartoon as slick, fast, colorful slapstick. The manic energy of the dying craft of burlesque was kept alive in the theatrical cartoon.

Disney's incredible *Snow White*, *Pinochio* and *Fantasia* showed the world there was more to animation than laughs. Their standards of realistic drawing and sentimental impact were so hard to meet, and harder to fake, that only now have animators begun to escape from Walt's shadow.

After World War II, the movie industry contracted into filmmaking and self-consciously meaningful cartoons began to compete for the postwar audience. Long multi-part film programs shrank into a feature, a preview and out on the street again. The studios that still made

[opposite page left] Max the Merry Missionary in action from Derek Hayes' and Phillip Austin's Animation City studio; (top) from IT'S AN O.K. LIFE by George Griffin; (left) majestic ship from MAX BEEZA AND THE CITY IN THE SKY by Animation City.

cartoon shorts closed their doors one by one. Animators scrambled for the television work, where new cartoons barely held their own against Bugs Bunny shown as often as *I Love Lucy*.

The most conspicuously brilliant refugees from the big studios formed the revolutionary UPA Studio. Their propaganda attacked the "fuzzy animal" (read "Disney") aesthetic as intellectually soft and financially suicidal. Their pictures replaced the realistic style and fantasy plots with a thrifty, vigorous, modern drawing style and an interest in the problems of people, including their near-sighted star, Mr. Magoo.

These brave new cartoons were widely imitated, most effectively by the state-run animation studios of Eastern Europe. Film production there is non-competitive and cartoons are not watered down for television or squeezed out by more expensive features. Many other countries also require theaters to present shorts along with features. Often local shorts are mandated as well. The Canadians, Yugoslavs and the Soviet Bloc all produce a steady stream of high quality cartoons for local screens and the festivals, winning prizes and employing lots of artists.

When it is done right, which is not often enough, animation has all the excitement and impact of any feature-length, live-action film. Animation works, as art and entertainment, but in America, it has no place in the marketing network.

The United States government does not run an animation studio and does not tell theater owners what to show. That's just not the free-enterprise thing to do. Instead, there are some grants available to independent filmmakers and voluntary programs to get their work into theaters. Here is how it works: you convince a committee that you've got the right stuff and they'll keep you in beans and rice while you draw. When you're finished, they pay you an honorarium (i.e. pittance) for the right to offer your film free to theaters. Even for free, there aren't many takers.

Like everyone else in the media-industrial complex, animators are speculating about how they will fare in the video revolution. The narrow-casting which cable, videocassettes and videodiscs are supposed to make possible should be a natural for animation.

When people are buying discs they'll want to see as often as they hear them. The animated film, which

Beeza, a 22-minute tour-de-force, is a cartoon Warner Brothers might have made if they were into a punk aesthetic.



(above) Johnny Rotten leaves the pub. From *THE GREAT ROCK 'N' ROLL SWINDLE*; (at right) Phillip Austin (left) and Derek Hayes.

held its author's interest for every frame, should be compelling enough to command its share of the audience. And the audience, after watching *Star Wars*' animated special effects for the 500th time, will be more sophisticated and naturally seek out more product for their new craving.

Not accustomed to easy solutions, few animators are holding their breaths waiting for a fairy godmother to materialize.

A new Mickey Mouse is not about to emerge from the independents. Not even a new Mr. Magoo. This situation suits today's independent animators. Stardom is not part of the equation, but neither is the need to act out the boss's fantasy. Success in animation is no longer spelled with a dollar sign.

To see more animation than you have been seeing takes a bit of work. It is out there but you have to hunt it down.

One place to start is your local art museum. Now that film is an official art form, many museums run independent film programs, including or devoted solely to animation. One to watch for is the annual "International Tournee of Animation" program which tours the museum circuit.

You could also bug your local theater managers, appealing to their

sense of showmanship, telling them you'd probably be inclined to go to a few marginal movies if you could be sure you'd see a good cartoon along with it.

If you live near a college campus, keep tabs on the many film screenings likely to be going on. Distributors of independent animation say colleges are their best customers.

But even if you cannot leave your home, you need not despair. Public television frequently features new animation as part of its "Video/Film Review" series, and many animators pay the rent by illustrating letters for



"Sesame Street."

Cable networks promise even better. Many of the new satellite networks, in order to get FCC approval, promised to put in 24-hour children's stations. With all that time to fill, quality animation should have a chance. Fine Arts stations offer the same opportunity for more adult cartoons.

The state of new animation in general is only part of the story, each animator's life and work is unique. The artists profiled here are not exactly typical, but suggest the scope and variety of today's animation.

Phillip Austin and Derek Hayes

Like many other pleasant experiences, some of the best new animation is illegal. It is not illegal to make it or see it, just to show it theatrically.

Derek Hayes' and Phillip Austin's first film, *Custard*, made while they were students in art school, got them a prize and admission to film school. While they were film students, they collaborated on their second film, *Max Beeza* and *The City in the Sky*.

Beeza is a 22-minute tour-de-force of everything you're not supposed to be able to do anymore: full cell animation, lots of moving, mostly human characters, biting social satire dissolved into loony slapstick. Full of inside jokes, it is a cartoon Warner

Brothers would have made it if they were into a punk aesthetic. Made without a union soundtrack, it can not be "legally" released.

Hayes and Austin split up after graduation. Austin worked for the Dick Williams studios, a class act in England where he worked on commercials and the studio's new feature, *The Thief and the Cobbler*. Hayes was hired by the BBC, where he worked on a series of animated conversations based on documentary soundtracks. Hayes' film depicted two hippies who talked about "straightening out the pyramids,"

using a feature about an alien private detective chasing a murderer through time.

George Griffin

George Griffin is a top-perfect example of today's independent animator. He lives and works in a loft on a sleazy East Village street. He collaborates with Karen Cooper, who helps operate the tiny Film Forum which shows, yes, independent films.

His father was an architect, and he mentions the famous "frozen music" analogy, applying it to his films. There is a formal quality to his films, as say, a head or face is reduced to a

Commercial? Probably not. But, if Deaf Smith Peanut Butter asked him, he wouldn't turn them down.

Frank and Caroline Mouris

Frank and Caroline Mouris hit the jackpot with their first nickel, an overnight success many years in the making. *Frank Film*, the animation Oscar-winner of 1975, is an autobiographical collage of Frank's life as an obsessive image fiend, its multilevel, stream-of-consciousness soundtrack and frantic manipulation of familiar images, pop icons clipped from untold thousands of



*Frank Mouris

Examples of the collage style used by Frank Mouris in his Oscar winner **FRANK FILM.**

The Canadians, Yugoslavs and the Soviet Bloc all produce a steady stream of high quality cartoons, winning prizes and employing lots of artists.

which they thought had become hopelessly crinkled.

Two years ago, Austin and Hayes established their own London-based studio: Animation City. Their first job was the Sex Pistols' movie, *The Great Rock and Roll Swindle*. Austin and Hayes did a few fully animated sequences, the special effects and titles. The Pistols' break-up almost canned the project, and the finished film is considered too provocative for the eyes of Youth. Theater owners fear a repeat of the *Rock Around the Clock* riots; the film has not yet been released. Strike two.

Still, at 28, Hayes and Austin are young enough to bounce back from these setbacks. They pay the rent by doing promotional films for rock groups, films they hope to see on videocdiscs someday. The mod acts who record for Two-Tone records, Fifties' nostalgia act Showaddywaddy and "Baker Street" singer Gerry Rafferty have all hired Animation City to do films. This kind of work brings in the same steady cash as commercials but offer fewer artistic restrictions. Once a rock client approves the storyboard, Derek and Phillip can do whatever they want.

They want to create a large body of work, more than the "two minute snatches" many modern animators are now limited to. They are plan-

ning lines inside a rectangle. A face that can be drawn on graph paper can also be a starting point for a Euclidian grammar of expression or a systematic exploration of all possible variations.

Improvisation, the jazz musicians most envied artistic discipline, has been embraced by Griffin. His uncomplicated, schematic drawings provide a sense of visual tonality, a clear distinction between the music and the noise.

Like a composer, or architect, Griffin is content to merely imply a narrative. To tell a story would inhibit an individual's response to the film, much as a novel's illustrations fail to satisfy the mind's eye.

Not surprisingly, Griffin does not believe his work is best presented between the feature and the coming attractions. The ideal all-Griffin program is possible now only in an academic or museum setting; not exactly the road to stardom.

Though in little danger of achieving fame and fortune, George Griffin is well respected among animators and satisfied with the animator's life. He makes a modest living, now, after ten years of something less than modest. He alternates an occasional job for an educational television show with his less profitable personal work.

magazines Frank is compelled to buy, beg, or filch from the dentist's office.

Frank Film is one of the most widely shown new animated films. It is such an achievement in collage animation that the Mourises turned to manipulation of live images for their next films, beginning a trilogy on Coney Island and making films about the lives of the magic, blessed, doomed people who try to succeed in Hollywood.

Though, by now, they might seem to be part of the Hollywood animation establishment, Frank says they are "just able" to make a living, an accomplishment which becomes "more and more impossible each year."

The Mourises made a brilliant return to animated collage with *Impasse*.

Frank had always meddled about with the little paper stick-on labels made by the Avery company. Doing a film with the labels was too expensive to contemplate until a combination of Hollywood chutzpah and an old school tie convinced Avery of the noble but intangible rewards of supplying enough labels to make a film. The result is a wonderful essay of geometry and color and motion.

Next up: The "answer" to *Frank Film* and (gasp) a live-action, feature length musical about Hollywood. ■



kideo:

PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDREN'S TELEVISION A Guide to what's what on broadcast TV

Part Two of a SERIES by Marilyn Ferdinand

IN THE FIRST OF THIS THREE part series we took a look at the children's home video marketplace. This article deals with network programming for children, since network television still supplies the bulk of video entertainment for kids. An overview shows that although there are occasional examples of brilliance, the majority of what airs falls somewhere between banal and belittling.

It is appalling to see how little attention is paid to the entertainment value of the programming: animation that probably would look better as still pictures, program hosts whose personalities have all the appeal of a bowl of cold oatmeal, humor that would (and undoubtedly does) insult the intelligence of a

four-year old. If any adults were to take the advice of the experts and watch the tube with their children some Saturday morning, there would be more television sets with locks on them.

Yet, there are some programs that provide entertaining and enriching experiences for children, and they can be found on every network every day of the week. This article contains a listing of many of the shows, both good and bad, now being aired. This compendium, arranged by network, is not complete, and changes may have been made since this went to press. Still, it should give you a good idea of what might be good for your kids to watch, and what might be avoided. All you have to do is convince the little ones.



CBS

30 Minutes—60 Minutes In half the time, for people half the size. A must see, since this is the only real news-information program for the young-set.

New Fat Albert—Children are lucky to have someone like Bill Cosby around who acknowledges that they are human enough to have a sense of humor. Good animated entertainment that manages to get a message across along the way.

Bugs Bunny/Road Runner Hour—Golden oldies from the movie theaters. Fantastic animation, still funny (although some of the references are getting a bit archaic), and I bet nobody gripes about the violence in these cartoons.

Tom and Jerry Comedy Show—A redone survivor from the days of full

animation. Farcical fantasy worth a watch.

All New Popeye Hour—Another redone animated relic, although feminists concerned about sex stereotypes may not agree. Still, the trade-off is that the kids will eat their spinach. But, is it enough?

Captain Kangaroo—A venerable hodgepodge of storytelling, music, instruction, puppetry and so forth. Bob Keeshan still makes a good skipper, but he may be looking a little green around the gills to a happier set of kiddies.

Adventures of Mighty Mouse/Huckle and Jeckle—Dumb, but lively animation that is slightly irreverent. The biggest disappointment was that the new Mighty Mouse did not sing. "Here I Come To Save The Day."

Mickey Mouse: Walt Disney Productions; Fred Flare: Fred Flare; Bugs Bunny: Warner Bros.; Daffy Duck: Warner Bros.; Tweety Bird: Warner Bros.; Superman: DC Comics Inc.; Mighty Mouse: Hanna-Barbera; Popeye: King Features; Road Runner: Turner; Fat Albert: Turner; New Fat Albert: Turner; Tom and Jerry: Turner; Captain Kangaroo: CBS, Inc.

Bill Cosby
acknowledges
children actually
have a sense of
humor on the
New Fat Albert
show.



Road Runner ©Warner Bros., Inc.



Fat Albert ©
William H. Cosby, Jr.
©Filmation Associates



Bugs Bunny ©Warner Bros., Inc.

Jason of Star Command—Cosmic debris. Kiddie viewers are in for a fleeing.

NBC

Daffy Duck—Sufferin' Succotash! Another animated animal who has stood the test of time. It is nice to see television pick up what the movies have set aside—done more out of desperation than preservation.

Disney's Wonderful World—The quality fluctuates, but the name goes on. Except for some of the old cartoons and the older feature films, the wonderful world is looking a little ordinary.

Jetsons—An animated look into the future from out of the past. It still works, and Astro is the best animated dog on the air ("Rats Right!").

Fred and Barney Meet the Shmoo—Actually, they never meet—they just share office space. A "Flintstones" spinoff that generally ignores the caveman angle—unforgivable. The Shmoo looks like Casper the Friendly Seal and has the power to metamorphose into any shape. Maybe it can turn the show into a basketball and bounce it off the air.

Johnny Quest—An adventure cartoon that is at least a dozen years old, but unlike Crown Royal, it has not improved with age. All it does is give swamps, blonde-haired boys and East Indian princes bad images.

Godzilla/Globetrotter Adventure Hour—I thought Godzilla was a bad guy. Ooops! And these Globetrotters have superpowers beyond being able to sink baskets at half-court. The idea for this animated team-up most likely came out of a box of sugar-coated sugar.

ABC

ABC Afterschool Special—A truly special series of genuinely good dramas dealing with relevant issues in young people's lives. It is hard to believe that this comes from the same people who bring us "Happy Days."

ABC Weekend Specials—Not as special as "Afterschool." The animation is pretty bad, but the stories are engrossing. At least it made me look up from my newspaper more than once.

American Bandstand—At last! Dick Clark is starting to look his age! But the classic, video sock-hop has not changed very much. The clothes,

the kids, the music come and go, but the beat goes on and on and on.

Kids Are People Too—If our children are to be properly acculturated, I guess it was inevitable that they have their own talk show. This one is cutely, but definitely preferable to "The Dick Cavett Show."

Scooby and Scrappy Doo—Big, dumb cartoon dog meets little, dumb, cartoon dog for adventure and to kill an hour—literally. Top-rated—unfortunately.

Drak Pack—This stilted cartoon features kids who turn into super-powered monsters, weirdos and freaks. I think we know what kind of homelife the producer of this turkey has.

World's Greatest Superfriends—DC Comics continue to cash in on the licensing market, but the kids would probably prefer to read the comic books, rather than watch this stiff animation.

Plastic Man Comedy/Adventure—Another raid on the comic book industry, this time destroying one of the cleverest, most beautifully rendered heroes of the 1940s. Children won't feel ripped off on that score, but the insultingly low humor should induce them to turn off.

PBS

Once Upon A Classic—Excellent junior "Masterpiece Theatre" that never compromises on quality, with beautiful productions of new stories and classics alike. Bill Bixby, everybody's favorite surrogate-father, hosts.

Zoom—Refreshing show because there are no adults hovering omnisciently over this all-kid cast at play. Viewer contributions go into the show, and most children should feel very comfortable with the natural flow. I like the theme song.

Wild, Wild World of Animals—Not much different from any other wild animal show, except that these beasts do not buy life insurance from Mutual of Omaha.

Electric Company—A Children's Television Workshop effort at education through entertainment for young children. Fortunately, these days the emphasis is more on the entertainment and less on looking for preschool Einsteins.

Sesame Street—The Muppets' first big break was on this show. And that

is about all it has going for it. The adults on the series dominate their child charges and spout a lot of pretentious garbage. Some parents may disagree, but I say, let them count on their fingers. The show teaches children it's O.K. to learn through the sterile television tube.

Freestyle—Moral and situational dramas for school-age children. There is a tendency towards preachiness, but they usually get the point across in an interesting manner.

Sky Pirates—The heroic helicopter theme rediscovered in this live action adventure import for children.

Mister Rogers' Neighborhood—If Fred Rogers were any more soft-spoken and innocuous he would turn into an umbrella stand. This nice program is perfect for the preschooler who aspires to be an accountant or an insurance salesman.

— SYNDICATED —

The Muppet Show—Certainly one of the best shows of any kind on the air today. Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy, Gonzo and the rest of the Muppets are now national institutions, and this half-hour extravaganza of music and comedy is pure magic. If the kids do not like it, they probably grew up in a Skinner Box.

New Zoo Revue—Can a man, a woman, an owl, a frog and a hippo drive a point into the ground in a half-hour? Answer: Oh, yes! A lackluster program filled with rotten singing and dancing.

Big Blue Marble—An interesting, magazine-style program that shows kids facing challenges in everything from gymnastics, to cross-country skiing, to ranching. A good confidence builder and very absorbing.

Romper Room—A pre-school/early grade school classic. Crafts, stories, games and, of course, the magic mirror in which the Romper Room teacher always sees Johnnies and Susies, but never any Muhammeds or Yukios.

Bozo—The studio big-top featuring Bozo, the clown who probably started the Big Foot rumors, will probably never pull up stakes.

Spider-Man—An animated version of Marvel Comics' most neurotic superhero. Some of the comic's wit is lost in the translation, but that is par for the course. ■



Sesame Street Photo: Courtesy Children's Television Workshop

The adults on Sesame Street dominate the children and spout a lot of pretentious garbage.



Daffy Duck © Warner Bros., Inc.



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Newsline

(Continued from page 29)

teletext market by their nemesis—the cablecasters who might decide to introduce their own non-compatible videotext systems. Under recent government deregulation, cable and common carriers do not require FCC approval for such systems and, the NAB points out, “unlike broadcasters, they are unburdened by the technical constraints of the broadcast signal.”

The FCC is currently considering an inquiry into this area rather than settling for a more rigid rulemaking procedure. The NAB believes—along with the CBS network—that such an inquiry would serve only to delay implementation of a standardized teletext system by two to three years, during which time the cable people could sneak in with their own unique systems. Besides, the NAB contends, the FCC now has “sufficient information to adopt a standard,” and has petitioned for the rulemaking procedure.

Following in the wake of this call for immediate action, the United Kingdom Teletext Industry Group (UKTIG) has filed comments with the FCC to consider a number of different systems before making its final decision. The British fear that in the rush to get

things done, their system could quite possibly lose out in the U.S. to others, particularly the Antiope or Telidon systems.

The English group believes its system, currently with 150,000 receivers in operation in England—and soon to be going up in Australia, Austria, Holland, West Germany and Sweden, to be superior to all others in terms of delivery and cost.

The UKTIG, for example, points out that though all teletext systems require processing, theirs occurs at the point of transmission rather than reception. This cuts down drastically on the cost of their decoder boxes. They further argue that this technical sophistication—though requiring periodic upgrades—will be cheaper and easier to do because the upgrading can be done at the point of transmission and requires no work on the receiving end, again unlike other systems. As far as the clarity of transmission goes, the UKTIG claims that theirs is superior, being less vulnerable to interference and multiple path effects.

So the battle rages on in Washington and London but, regardless of how this revolution turns out, the colonies will most certainly be the winners once again.

satellite feeds tends to price the service out of the home market. But both UPI and Reuters see the satellite delivery of Cabletext as an important step in terms of technology. Both, in fact, view it as the beginning of putting all their services on communications birds.

In the words of UPI's director of cable television services Tom Hawley, “We see it as one way we're starting to wean ourselves away from the telephone company,” i.e., their reliance on Ma Bell's landlines to transmit their services.

JUST LET ME CHECK THOSE FIGURES ON MY ABACUS

Personal home computers may be the wave of the future, but current marketing surveys show the wave may not be breaking exactly where the industry had hoped. Personal computers, it seems, are making their mark with business users rather than in the home. Still, the computer industry harbors many optimists who are convinced that by 1990 one out of every four people in the U.S. will own one.

One of the most vocal of these is Raymond E. Kassar, chairman of Warner Communications' Atari subsidiary. According to Kassar, if that 25 percent penetration is to be reached, the home computer industry must shift to a more consumer-oriented way of thinking.

“We must come to know the consumer,” Kassar says. “The consumer will dominate our industry, drive our industry and determine whether millions will be made or lost on the road to our heralded home information explosion.” What is needed, he continued, is for the potential home computer owner to understand the benefits and values of the machines, as well as how high technology businesses offer their products.

Kassar thinks the industry has to start communicating to potential customers in common lingo rather than technical jargon. “We talk to ourselves in a special high tech and discrete language. Bits, bytes, satellites, sources, signals, software, discs, data, access, chips, charts, modems . . .” are terms that do not impress but intimidate the average consumer.

Design is another area that the home computer industry will have to reevaluate. “Consumers are impatient. The computer has to be as easy to operate as a typewriter and television. Data access has to be as simple as dialing a telephone or changing the channel.”

Even though consumers are not buying as fast as Kassar would like, the industry is not hurting. A recent survey

(Continued on page 55)

TELETEXT GOING UNDER

Before it can even become a thing of the future, the Australian Teletext system may be a thing of the past. While such a system can deliver every conceivable type of news and information to its viewers, the folks down under have failed to generate enough interest to keep the Australian television networks interested in continuing the service.

Citing this less-than-overwhelming demand for the service, Sydney's Channel TCN9 has decided not to develop the project any further until its commercial applications become more apparent. And, even though competing



Channel ATN7 plans to go ahead with their Teletext service, they too admit its continuation may prove fruitless in the face of Australian apathy.

“IT'S TIME TO CUT YOUR APRON STRINGS, MA!”

While the FCC holds hearings and meetings trying to decide which of the dozens of teletext systems currently in use to adopt for use in the U.S., one cable system has already made up its mind.

The new system is Southern Satellite's Cabletext, which went on line recently after a year and a half of experimentation. The system is delivered on

Satcom 1's transponder six vertical interval—that little black bar you see when the picture on your television goes into a vertical roll. Subscribers of Cabletext will receive most of both the UPI and Reuters news wire services.

Do not, however, expect to have your home plugged into the system anytime soon. While the \$75 per month per system (UPI and Reuters) and \$50 per month decoder charges are reasonable, the \$20,000 a month minimum fees for computer time and

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Written so you don't have to be a T.V. repairman or electronics genius to understand it, **VIDEO ACTION** covers every aspect of the field. We keep you on top of the latest in broadcast and cable television, in video discs, cassettes and games. We keep you informed of all the changes in the field—what's new, what's being replaced, what's changed ... and how all this will effect you, your family and your society.

VIDEO ACTION is the best possible guide for living in the video world.

VIDEO ACTION. Take control of your T.V.

How I Learned To Stop Worrying And Love My VDT

DELINEATION by Elaine Viets

The common person discovered newspaper publishers were replacing typewriters with Video Display Units (VDTs) a couple of years ago when Lou Grant's Los Angeles Tribune made the big conversion. Since then, VDTs and word processors have made their way into business offices of all sorts.

St. Louis Post-Dispatch columnist Elaine Viets was forced into making the switch almost four years ago. Her first story "was about a day spent with a garbage man. That should have told me something."

Viets continues: "Since I've gotten so used to the green machine, I had to write (the following story) on the VDT first, before I typed it out. Which should tell you how well I've adapted to the thing."

At first, there was some staff resistance to the VDT. That's how they always say it in the psychology textbooks.

Actually, we hated everything about the infernal machine. Even the

Lou Grant isn't the only one writing newspaper stories on desk-top television sets . . .



name. "VDT? Sounds like a social disease in a detox ward," I swiped that line from a paperback novel. Everyone had a pet insult. "If I wanted to see a screen all day, I'd get a job at a TV station and make some real money," was another.

There were other reasons to dislike the VDT: It had funny green letters. The cursor blinked reproachfully while you stared at the blank screen and tried to think of something to write. You had to go to school like a PBX operator to learn

how to use the thing.

The real problem was that the VDT was unromantic. Computer jargon—"data base," "software," "floppy disk"—replaced the comfortable old words.

Thanks to the green machine, the whole newsroom had to be renovated. The old office featured a fine collection of dented metal desks, broken wooden chairs (for visitors) and swivel chairs with torn seats (for reporters). Plus a number of olive-drab file cabinets and lopsided wood-

en coat racks. A few reporters still kept spittoons, usually filled with cigar butts and cold coffee. It was uncomfortable, inconvenient and phoney as a stage set. We loved it.

The new city room was actually designed by a decorator. It had white-tile elevated floors to accommodate the tangle of computer cables. Dropped ceilings with indirect lighting. Color-coordinated office furniture: pale gray with dark blue accents. And wall-graphics for God's sake.

The staff grew disgustingly sentimental. "We used to look like 'Front Page.' Now we're an insurance agency," was the usual comment.

Reporters do not get their own VDTs. They are supposed to sit in "pods" of four desks and share. If somebody is using the VDT in your pod, you move to another. Reporters circle an about-to-be-vacated machine like buzzards, waiting to pick it off.

The VDTs are on small, cramped tables. The person who used the machine last spilled coffee and cigarette ashes on the keys. (Strange. You're always so neat.) When the phone rings you run across the room to answer it.

Oh, it was horrible, I tell you. Horrible. I could go on for hours.

Except by this time, we'd been using the machines for six months. Certain traitors were beginning to admit they . . . um . . . liked the VDTs. One by one the staff went over to the other side.

There were all those keys to play with: Dark gray, light gray, green, blue. There were lights and blinkers. I never did find out what some of the keys were for. What does SPALN do? Or FIG SP? Never mind. How often do you get to hit a button that says EXECUTE?

I'd never have to cross out a bad paragraph again. Instead, I hit DEF PARA. That neatly outlined the affected area. Then I zapped it with the DELETE key.

A satisfying experience. It sure beat yanking the paper out of the typewriter.

A nifty TRANSPOSE key would move whole paragraphs. WORD COUNT told you how much you'd written, and another key made capital letters into lower case ones, and vice versa.

TOP STORY sent the cursor instantly to the beginning of your piece.

HARD COPY got you a print-out of the story.

The VDT was great . . . when it worked.

Cops Clobber Computer Robber

As the role of electronics continues to increase in the day-to-day workings of most major metropolitan newspapers, so do the risks involved. Not merely the risk that the machines will break down or malfunction at a critical moment—although that is generally an inevitability. But in this instance, the risk is to the machines themselves.

It began last October in Philadelphia where St. Louis Post-Dispatch sports columnist Rick Hummel was covering a play-off game between the Phillies and the Houston Astros. With him he had a Teleram, a somewhat bulky portable computer used to transmit stories by telephone from the field to the paper. Since the Teleram is such a weighty item to drag around, Hummel left it in the backseat of his rental car in the hotel garage.

At approximately 5:45 that morning, the reporter received an anonymous phone call in his room from a man claiming to be a high school student who, while out jogging, found some papers belonging to Hummel. The caller also said there was another item along with those papers—Hummel's Teleram.

When Hummel went down to the garage he discovered the \$4500 machine was indeed missing from his car, along with his briefcase and shoulderbag. Also missing was one of the car's windows. With the uncanny instincts of a seasoned reporter, Hummel deduced he had been robbed and that his early morning caller was no mere high school kid.

Hotel security and the Philadelphia police leapt into action

and when the computer-napper called back later with his demands, they were listening in. "Look," he told the anxious reporter, "you want your machine back? Well, I paid \$100 for it from some guy, and I want \$200 more than that. So how about \$300?" How about it indeed—Hummel was already calculating how long it would take to repay the Post-Dispatch in weekly installments for the missing machine. \$300 was cheap.

Finally, later that night, after two aborted attempts at contact, Hummel met face to face with the possessor of his hapless Teleram. In his pocket he had \$300 in marked bills and at his back, two detectives to nab the alleged perpetrator. Hummel demanded to be taken to his machine, to make sure it was unharmed before he paid the ransom. The caller lead him into an alley—and there was the Teleram, safe and sound.

There was no time for reporter and electronic partner to have the expected tearful reunion. The transistor-stealing man was given the \$300 and started to walk away. Hummel signaled for the concealed detectives to move in for the kill. The man was booked for theft, theft by extortion and receiving stolen property. Computer-nabbing was not mentioned in the charges.

Fortunately, this story had a happy ending. But if the incident is any portent of future trends, it is not inconceivable that one day, the U.S. State Department will find itself negotiating with some small Middle Eastern nation for the safe and speedy release of hostage news gathering machines.

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Newsline

(Continued from page 48)

showed that the information industry has reached the \$94 billion market, a significant portion of the Gross National Product.

Such a figure does tend to undermine Kassar's recent pronouncements of the average consumer's ability to absorb the new technology.

PIRACY

A WAY OF LIFE . . . OR A WAY TO GET LIFE?

As the video revolution progresses, so does the number of incidents involving video piracy. More and more outfits and individuals are getting into bootlegging and illegal duplication of films in direct violation of copyright laws and federal trade rules. All this is keeping the courts very busy. It is also landing a few people heavy prison terms and steep fines.

Ruby Grottesman pleaded guilty in Miami to four counts of copyright infringement and upon sentencing received 18 months and lost his quarter-million dollar house to Uncle Sam. Also in Miami, Ronald Wholsky was convicted on eight counts of infringement for selling bootleg tapes of such flicks as *Heaven Can Wait*, *Conway*, and *FM*. Wholsky was just one of 18 defendants arrested in an FBI sweep in October 1979 and the only one of that group to plead not guilty.

U.S. District Court Judge Robert M. Takasugi found defendant Mark Thomas not guilty of selling an unauthorized video tape copy of *Star Wars* in Hollywood. The judge ruled that Thomas had not been proven to know the film was subject to a first legal sale.

With all this legal activity going on it is no surprise that the Justice Department has come into the act. They have announced that they will be cracking down on film, video and tape piracy, but they will not be moving on any potential cases unless there is evidence of widespread activity involving substantial dollar amounts.

THE FUTURE!

TRUE, BUT THERE'S MORE TO BE MADE IN TELEVISION REPAIR ANYWAY

FCC Commissioner Anne P. Jones predicts the Commission may soon become obsolete due to all the recent and projected advances in video technology. "If scarcity of channels is the rationale for our existence," Jones said, "we should get ready to put ourselves out of business."

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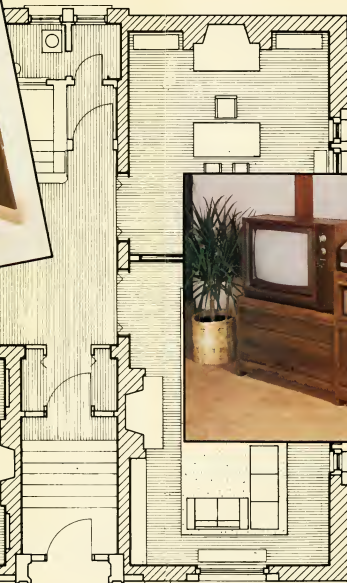
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Now that you've got your VCR, videodisc player and color TV . . .

WHERE DO YOU PUT IT?

ARTICLE by Ann DeLarye

MIKE SHEPERIS WORKS IN the furniture business. He is a laid-back, easy-going kind of guy whose modesty almost belies his position as national sales manager for the Gusdorf Corporation in St. Louis.

"If you were to ask a man-on-the-street what electronics furniture is," he mused recently, "he'd probably guess a robot or something. But there's so many things going on—television, VCR and videodisc are becoming more important. People need a place to put that stuff, and our time is right now."

Indeed it is—Gusdorf's 1980 sales have leaped almost 50% over 1979's as more and more people look for a place to house their new video toys.

Sheperis' counterpart at O'Sullivan Industries, Inc., one of Gusdorf's major competitors, is Tom Riegel whose modest manner makes him sound like Mike's older brother. Speaking of O'Sullivan's furniture line for video components, Riegel remarks, "A few years ago when we got this off the ground, most of our sales were to hi-fi dealers for displays. They sold them all quickly and needed more and it just kept rolling on from there. It's just like a fairy tale—never in our wildest dreams did we anticipate something like this." But O'Sullivan is not complaining about their 50% rise in 1980 sales, either.

Both O'Sullivan and Gusdorf provide furniture to house televisions, VCRs, videodiscs, and audio equipment. Right now, the television/VCR cabinetry is a hot combination getting hotter. From credenzas and eta-



The best-sellers—Gusdorf's Status Pro® model 1930 (upper left) and O'Sullivan's model DC926 (above). Gusdorf's model won recognition as "one of the most innovative consumer electronics products" of 1980 at Consumer Electronics Show.

(lower left) O'Sullivan's model DC911 houses a 19-inch television, VCR and videotapes.

Floor plan by J.A. Jonuss



geres to stands and racks, there is a growing need for the centralization of video in the home. And where there is need, there are suppliers.

Electronics furniture had its roots in the dawning of the electronic age. Radio cabinetry accompanied the medium's rise out of the 1920s, and today such furniture is regarded as antique.

"We made the first television stand way back in 1946," claims Gusdorf's Sheperis. "We were the first company to make furniture specifically for TV. For so many years we've been there making these stands, and right now we are making a product the demand for which far exceeds supply."

O'Sullivan was not far behind Gusdorf in cracking the budding television furniture market. Tom Riegel relates, "We started out making television stands for the General

Electric Company. We also made stereo stands for GE and other people. We then went to a full line of television and stereo stands for retail." O'Sullivan now has three entertainment centers which accommodate television, VCR and a host of other electronic companions.

Initially, O'Sullivan was not at all sure what sort of furniture market the new VCRs would create. In fact, it was only recently that cabinetry for audio set-ups was introduced. Riegel explains, "About two years ago last June there was a hi-fi show in Atlanta, Georgia. We went down there with the impression that we would get a feel among six audio cabinets and possibly keep two to put in our line. But we weren't there an hour before we realized there was tremendous need. Our prices were good, they liked our styling, and we kept all six of them."

"The growth of the audio cabinets and the VCR were about at the same time, though VCR cabinets were slower for us because there were fewer VCRs in the homes."

"Now we've expanded our VCR stands. Quite a few audio dealers are selling video recorders, and we are selling quite a few video stands to hi-fi dealers."

A very early marketing technique which has persisted and contributed to both O'Sullivan's and Gusdorf's lines has been that of encouraging dealers to use the furniture in place of special display cabinets. "One of our major selling points," Tom Riegel claims, "is that rather than buying display fixtures, which are expensive, dealers can buy our cabinets to display their merchandise. It is designed for that, so it will accentuate the product they are trying to sell. At the same time they can sell the cabinet with it."

Not all dealers use salable furniture to display their video wares, and those that do not can be very secretive about divulging their display sources should you desire something similar for your own home. Owner Charles Kiven of the Chicago-area Video Forum stores would not utter a word about where he got his unusual metal desk-like display setups. "That's proprietary information," he insisted. "I don't want to get involved in that." It is wise to be prepared for similar responses from other dealers.

The best-selling television/VCR home entertainment centers put out by Gusdorf (the Status Pro® 1930) and O'Sullivan (the DC926) are somewhat similar. Both are approximately 50 inches wide, 28 inches high and 16 inches deep. They accommodate 19-inch televisions, VCRs, some audio equipment, and have storage areas for records, videotapes or whatever else you wish.

Besides the design of the storage spaces, the one difference between the Gusdorf and O'Sullivan best-sellers is VCR tape access. While O'Sullivan's VCR shelf is on its top, Gusdorf has its shelf in the middle. The shelf moves in and out so that tape ejection is unhampered.

Prices are within the affordable range of most VCR-owning families—O'Sullivan's DC926 has a suggested retail price of \$129.95; Gusdorf's Status Pro® model 1930 runs between \$200 and \$300. The Gusdorf model was chosen by the Electronic Industries Association as "one of the most innovative consumer electronics products" of 1980 at the Consumer Electronics Show



O'Sullivan Industry's DC 930 electronics cabinet.

(right) The first TV stand from Gusdorf Corporation was introduced within eight years after televisions were available to the American consumer. It is thought to have signaled the beginning of the electronics furniture industry.



—the first piece of furniture ever to be so honored.

Components and tapes are not guarded by any kind of security devices in either the Gusdorf or the O'Sullivan line. O'Sullivan's Tom Riegel points out that because the back of the furniture must be flexible and adjustable, locks on the front would be useless—a thief would need only remove the back. Sheperis agrees, adding security devices would make the price of their furniture go up appreciably and not that many people demand it. As far as keeping children away from the components, Sheperis suggests parents improvise.

In terms of backing and ventilation, both Gusdorf and O'Sullivan have designed-in features to deal with these needs (not all their competitors have). When shopping for electronics furniture, keep this fact in mind—you can blow up your components by overheating them in unventilated storage areas.

Most of O'Sullivan's backs are completely open for ventilation and wiring needs. Sheperis explains Gusdorf's engineering: "We have totally flexible backs. There are panels that go onto the back that fill the blank spaces between the instruments and the side. If you had it backed up on a white wall, for instance, you would not be able to see the wall. In between those panels are 'access ports'—just basic holes—large enough for all the interconnecting wires. Then we also provide pressure-sensitive wire looms that actually attach to the back where the wires can all be bundled together into a neat package.

"One of the basic considerations with video tape recorders is the heaviness of the wires that go into the back . . . so we have special access ports for VCR accommodation that are larger and are fashioned in such a way as to allow wires to move against those ports without catching or abrading. We've got heat venting in the back and at the top."

Neither Gusdorf nor O'Sullivan make solid wood furniture in their VCR lines. Gusdorf's VCR centers are constructed from particle board, while O'Sullivan's pieces are constructed from fiberboard which, they contend, is of a superior quality.

Both companies' insides are hollow with special structural supports. This cuts down on the shipping weight, and hence the cost to the customer. Sheperis claims similar furniture in solid wood could easily run in the \$600 to \$700 range with no real difference in durability.



(above) More than a television stand—Gusdorf's Status Pro® model 1920 houses a 19-inch television, VCR and videotapes. VCR shelf pulls out for tape ejection (See Consumer Inquiries at end of article)

For people with limited floor space, the Gusdorf Status Pro® model 1990 has a vertical design. Houses a 19-inch television, VCR on a pull-out shelf, tapes and up to three other video or audio components. (See Consumer Inquiries list at end of article)

Once you have purchased your new VCR furniture and put it together (most pieces come disassembled—another cost saver), you will have to decide where in the house to place your new entertainment center. For the professional view on how to fashionably integrate one's video into the home *Video Action* called upon Ron Barnum, a member of the American Society of Interior Design and resident design expert for the House Store, a young life-style oriented furniture and housewares emporium in Chicago's trendy New Town area.

According to Barnum, "A custom-designed viewing room could run anywhere from \$5000 to \$120,000 depending on how elaborate the materials and how intricate the custom cabinetry was to store each component. Custom work is very expensive today. However, you see enough of it in magazines, especially in the five to seven thousand dollar range, to know there are a lot

of people doing it.

"The very rich are into it in a big way. One of the status symbols of the '80s is going to be the electronic environment."

Barnum's House Store, however, caters to the mass market, but in a way that is designed to appeal to a more mobile (and perhaps more "hip") market than Gusdorf and O'Sullivan. And while the House Store carries everything from couches to kitchenwares, "based on the people that come in here, I would say 70% are looking to solve the problem of what to do with their stereos, televisions, records and tapes. It is the most commonly-asked question we get."

Barnum is enthusiastic about modular furniture. "Modularity is really the new concept of the '80s. We do not have living room suites—we have storage systems. They have the flexibility to answer whatever storage problem must be worked with."



Example of the High Tech style. Silver baker's racks are used to cool pies and pastries but hold televisions and video components at home. Displayed at Chicago's Houssa Store. (See Consumer Inquiries list at end of article).

For the truly chic, modularity and video go together in a style that has become known as "High Tech," a style on which Barnum has some very specific views: "It is a very badly-used term. What High Tech really means is the idea of putting what we would normally consider office or industrial products into residential use. The reason that it has become so popular is because much of our engineering and ingenuity has gone into the industrial areas. There are great values. Pieces are made to be really durable and highly functional. Out of that comes a new aesthetic which is based on the industrial look."

Barnum cites an example of High Tech, "Restaurant bakers' racks, the kind that are made of wire and used to cool pies, are quite handsome. The shininess of it is a very interesting visual look. They are very durable and not prohibitively expensive." These he cautions against using with audio equipment. "It conducts sound... it reverberates. For things like televisions I think it would be fine, but if you were really using it for sound reproduction, the wire is not as good as wood."

Much of Barnum's stock fits into his own definition of High Tech. Even his display racks are the kind used for parts storage in warehouses jazzed up with brightly painted colors. This same type of style might be brought into one's own home and used to integrate video into the living room by making components a focal point rather than something to blend into the background. But can this be successful in anyone's home?

"I think it depends on the spirit of

the room," Barnum answers thoughtfully. "If it is a super-casual room where everything is exposed, it obviously can be a very exciting thing. The design of electronic equipment today is very much in the spirit of High Tech. Make it the center of interest in the home. I'm sure eventually video will not be as exciting to us as it is now, but for the next few years everyone is intrigued with it visually, so I think to expose the component and make it an entertainment piece in itself is one way to do it."

If you do not have many thousands of dollars to lay out on a custom-designed video entertainment center, Barnum has a more practical suggestion. "Start turning dining rooms and spare bedrooms and dens into viewing/electronic rooms. Do not be afraid to take a small space with whatever the appropriate viewing distance is and do up a video cell where the purpose of that room is to go and view. You would have a screen dominating one end and just line the rest of the

Gusdorf's Compu-Table® has storage areas for software and manuals at the right. New design in the works will feature more desk space by putting monitor up off the work space. (See Consumer Inquiries list at end of article)



room with lounging or seating. You could integrate whatever activity that room was used for into a more general, all-purpose area where you would use dual-purpose furniture.

"Quite often, people have the feeling that small rooms should always be light because they think that's going to make it feel larger. In fact, some of the most dramatic rooms can be done by painting it very dark, doing it in dark brown or navy or Hunter green and letting it be a small, wonderful, personal space rather than making every room seem as large as it possibly can. There's something very cozy, intimate and nice about a small, personal kind of space. Having a dark space with that electronic picture coming out could be really wonderful."

If you are going to try High Tech or any other kind of furniture for housing your video and related equipment, keep in mind the following:

- 1) Most VCRs open at the top. Make sure that whatever slot you select for your VCR, it has enough room at the top to allow you to open the machine and insert your tapes.
- 2) Make sure there is sufficient opening for heat venting at the sides and top.
- 3) The back must be open and unobstructed for wiring. If the back is enclosed, determine if it is structurally possible to cut out holes where needed. Use a hack or saber saw, a drill and some sandpaper to smooth the edges so your wires are not rubbed to exposure.
- 4) Make sure the piece is stable. Check to see that the addition of a heavy television and VCR will not cause your rack to topple forward or lean stressfully to one side.

Televisions and VCRs are not the only components to have furniture designed around them. O'Sullivan's Riegel adds, "We're working on home computers right now. We put together all the literature we had on home computers and designed a special desk-type model." This they introduced in January, 1980.

Gusdorf's Sheperis reports similar activity at his company. "Last year we introduced what we call our CompuTable®, working with the Texas Instruments people, the APF people and others. The CompuTable® is not the most glamorous thing in the world, it is just a tremendously large work surface uptop. On the right side is a storage cabinet with adjustable shelving inside for your home computer software. We are building an addition, moving the monitor off the surface and up and back a bit so a person can have a lot



The Videnza® line Private Collection feature allows storage areas to swivel, revealing hidden tapes on other side.

of room to work."

Gusdorf is also there with furniture for people who own videodisc units. Explains Sheperis, "We had to consider videodisc similar to VCR. They're roughly the same size and have the same requirements in terms of furniture. We've got eight or ten pieces and a couple more coming out in January, 1981."

Tom Riegel has an answer for the owner of multiple VCRs. "O'Sullivan's most current cabinet, which we introduced in June, has enough room where the owner could put two VCRs, if they do not have four pieces of audio equipment." Most manufacturers do not see multiple-unit owners as a market large enough to

cater to yet, and for the time being space must be stolen from audio or storage to accommodate multiple video components.

Dyed-in-the-wool video freaks will be pleased to know there is finally some attention being paid to the problem of housing a tape library. One of Gusdorf's 1981 models "... will be responding to a demand for tape storage in large quantities. We've got a real nice double-door unit with storage for over 100 videotapes," announces Sheperis.

Another new product in the tape-storage category is Pyramid Manufacturing's Videnza® Modular Video Center. This company puts out the VT-100 tape storage cabinet, which, like Gusdorf's model, also houses up to 100 videotapes.

What makes the VT-100 unique is their "Private Collection" security feature. Inside the cabinet is a rotating unit. Fifty tapes can be stored on one side, then the owner rotates the inner unit to reveal space for fifty additional tapes hidden on the other side. The company suggests this feature be used "for your classic movies... collectibles... sensitive tapes best kept behind closed doors."

Pyramid also manufactures a cabinet for housing videodiscs, called the Disc-100™ disc storage unit. This cabinet does not have the "Private Collection" feature, but it does have room to put a videodisc unit on top.

And what of wide-screen TV? It is not quite the type of thing one can simply stick into the living room without some thought as to interior

design and dimensions. Back to designer Ron Barnum: "Anyone that is into wide-screen TV should be perfectly willing to build a room around it. If it's going to be there, it is going to be the focal point of the room."

"One of the keys to doing a good design is to make sure the room functions as a whole. Putting a wide-screen television at an angle in a corner of a square room is a 'wrong' way to do it. They are built to be flat up against a wall. A rectangular room rather than a square room would be better for a wide-screen so that you could put it at one end of the room."

"One of the tricks in working with a rectangular room is that you can paint an end wall a dark color or do something dramatic to psychologically shorten up the room. And it would be a good thing to keep the seating and viewing at the appropriate distance. In a square room it might narrow the room too much."

To some intrepid pioneers whose entire homes are given over to video, this kind of stuff is becoming old hat. For the majority, however, the new electronics gadgets and their accompanying furniture and interior design are just beginning to enter the consciousness. "What's the next wave in electronics?" Mike Sheperis asks rhetorically. "I really do not know. I'm sure computers are going to eventually tie in with video. We will have to deal with that when it happens."

Although Video Action did not mention all companies currently manufacturing furniture for video components, the list below should be a good start. Let us know if you run into anything really interesting or unusual in video furniture.

THE HOUSE STORE
620 West Schubert Street
Chicago, Illinois 60614
ATTN: Ronald Barnum, A.S.I.D.
(312) 525-7771

GUSDORF CORPORATION
6900 Manchester Avenue
St. Louis, Missouri 63143
ATTN: Mike Sheperis

O'SULLIVAN INDUSTRIES, INC.
19th and Gulf Streets
Lamar, Missouri 64759
ATTN: Tom Riegel

PYRAMID MANUFACTURING
13127 Harper Avenue
Detroit, Michigan 48213
ATTN: Customer Service
(313) 839-2888

The Videnza® line has space for a 19-inch television, a VCR and a videodisc player. Side cabinets provide storage for 100 tapes and 100 discs.



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**MIDWEST HOME VIDEO
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- ☐ ANIMAL HOUSE—\$59.95
- ☐ DRACULA—\$69.95
- ☐ DEER HUNTER—\$69.95
- ☐ AMERICAN GRAFFITI—\$69.95
- ☐ ELECTRIC HORSEMAN—\$69.95
- ☐ PSYCHO—\$59.95
- ☐ JAWS 2—\$69.95
- ☐ THE JERK—\$69.95
- ☐ BAD NEWS BEARS—\$59.95
- ☐ LOOKING FOR MR. GOODBAR—\$59.95
- ☐ THE MAKING OF STAR WARS—\$59.95
- ☐ GREAT MOMENTS IN BASEBALL—\$59.95
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- ☐ KNOCK ON ANY DOOR—\$59.95
- ☐ MISS SADIE THOMPSON—\$59.95
- ☐ PUMPING IRON—\$59.95
- ☐ SEVEN BEAUTIES—\$59.95
- ☐ SWEEP AWAY—\$59.95

- ☐ THE THREE STOOGES, VOL. 1 & 2—\$59.95
- ☐ DAVY CROCKETT, KING OF THE WILD FRONTIER—\$59.95
- ☐ ESCAPE TO WITCH MOUNTAIN—\$59.95
- ☐ HOT LEAD AND COLD FEET—\$59.95
- ☐ LOVE BUG—\$59.95
- ☐ THE NORTH AVENUE IRREGULARS—\$59.95
- ☐ THE WIZARD OF OZ—\$59.95
- ☐ THAT'S ENTERTAINMENT: PART 1—\$59.95
- ☐ ALL THAT JAZZ—\$79.95
- ☐ DOWN HILL RACER—\$69.95
- ☐ BRIAN'S SONG—\$59.95
- ☐ STARTING OVER—\$79.95
- ☐ BUTCH CASSIDY & THE SUNDANCE KID—\$69.95
- ☐ M.A.S.H.—\$69.95
- ☐ THE GODFATHER (PART 1)—\$69.95
- ☐ THE GODFATHER (PART 2)—\$69.95
- ☐ THE FRENCH CONNECTION—\$69.95
- ☐ THE GRADUATE—\$69.95
- ☐ CHINATOWN—\$69.95
- ☐ CITIZEN KANE—\$59.95

- ☐ 2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY—\$59.95
- ☐ PLANET OF THE APES—\$69.95
- ☐ FANTASTIC VOYAGE—\$59.95
- ☐ BUCK ROGERS CONQUERS THE UNIVERSE—\$59.95
- ☐ BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE APES—\$69.95
- ☐ THE THING—\$59.95
- ☐ KING KONG (1933 ORIGINAL)—\$69.95
- ☐ KING KONG (1977)—\$69.95
- ☐ SON OF KONG—\$59.95
- ☐ DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS—\$59.95
- ☐ FROM THE EARTH TO THE MOON—\$59.95
- ☐ ATTACK OF THE KILLER TOMATOES—\$59.95
- ☐ NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD—\$69.95
- ☐ WAR OF THE WORLDS—\$59.95
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- ☐ AT HOME WITH DONALD DUCK—\$44.95
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- ☐ PETE'S DRAGON—\$59.95
- ☐ MUPPET MOVIE—\$59.95
- ☐ FANTASTIC ANIMATION FESTIVAL—\$59.95



- ☐ MIGHTY MOUSE COLLECTION
—\$59.95
- ☐ SUPERMAN (1940'S MAX
FLEISCHER FEATURETTES)
—\$69.95
- ☐ BUGS BUNNY/ROAD RUNNER
MOVIE—\$69.95
- ☐ BUGS BUNNY CARTOON
FESTIVAL—\$59.95

ROCK N' ROLL

- ☐ BEATLES—LIVE AT SHEA
STADIUM—\$69.95
- ☐ SYMPATHY FOR THE DEVIL
(ROLLING STONES)—\$59.95
- ☐ GIMME SHELTER (ROLLING
STONES)—\$59.95
- ☐ WOODSTOCK—\$69.95
- ☐ GREASE—\$69.95
- ☐ SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER
—\$69.95
- ☐ AMERICAN HOT WAX—\$59.95
- ☐ JIMI HENDRIX—LIVE—\$69.95

ADULT

ALL ADULT FILMS \$89.00

- ☐ ANNA OBSESSED
- ☐ BLACK SILK STOCKINGS
- ☐ CANDY STRIPERS
- ☐ CHINA SISTERS
- ☐ CRY FOR CINDY
- ☐ DEBBIE DOES DALLAS
- ☐ DEEP THROAT
- ☐ DEFIANCE
- ☐ DEVIL IN MISS JONES
- ☐ EASY ALICE
- ☐ EMANUELLE
- ☐ EXPENSIVE TASTE
- ☐ FINISHING SCHOOL
- ☐ HONEY PIE
- ☐ HOT COOKIES
- ☐ INSIDE DESIREE COUSTEAU
- ☐ INSIDE JENIFFER WELLS
- ☐ LITTLE GIRL BLUE
- ☐ LOVELACE MEETS MISS JONES
- ☐ MARASCHINO CHERRY
- ☐ ODYSSEY
- ☐ OPENING OF MISTY BEETHOVEN
- ☐ PRETTY PEACHES
(DESIREE COUSTEAU)
- ☐ ROLLERBABIES
- ☐ SENSUOUS FLY GIRLS
- ☐ SERENA
- ☐ SEX WORLD
- ☐ STORY OF JOANNA
- ☐ THE SEDUCTION OF AMY
- ☐ THREE A.M.
- ☐ WET RAINBOW
- ☐ YOUNG SECRETARIES
- ☐ FLESH GORDON
- ☐ ALICE IN WONDERLAND (X)

MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO: Midwest Home Video

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Enclosed is my ☐ check, ☐ money order, ☐ charge to my
☐ Visa, ☐ Master Charge.

Interbank No. Exp. Date

Signature, Date

Foreign orders: Use International Money Order or Certified Check in U.S. dollars. Prices guaranteed for 60 days only. I understand that if my merchandise is defective due to craftsmanship and returned within 10 days it will be replaced free of charge. Otherwise, all sales are final. Quantity orders invited.

Subtotal

IL residents add 6% tax

Postage and handling \$1.75

Total

FORMAT ☐ VHS ☐ BETA (Check one)

LIST TITLES HERE



THE RATINGS RAT-RACE

How the Nielsen and Arbitron ratings effect the price of commercials and mean life-or-death for your favorite television show.

Part Two Of A SERIES
by Ann DeLary

As a television viewer you are a commodity which advertising agencies and television stations buy and sell. It is the ratings systems which find out who you are and how many of you watch any given show.

There are two main companies which compile television audience ratings data. Nielsen is known mainly for its network ratings covering the entire country; Arbitron is identified more with local station ratings. Both companies, however, compile national and local ratings.

Nielsen and Arbitron reveal who you are in statistics called demographics. Advertisers who place commercials on television want to know the age, sex, income levels and buying habits of the viewers their messages are reaching.

There are two different ways of determining how many of you watch a given show. The best known statistic is the rating point—the percentage of people watching a given show out of all the people in the country who own television sets, tuned in or not. A lesser-known statistic, but one of more importance to broadcasters than the rating point, is the audience share. This is the percentage of people tuned in who are watching a given show. The share is more important because it allows broadcasters to compare

their programming performance with that of their competitors.

Ratings and the Advertiser

Fundamentally, ratings are used to determine how much a station's or network's air time (the minutes which are sold for commercials) is worth. The people in advertising who buy air time are called broadcast or television spot time buyers. Usually, broadcast buyers work at advertising agencies, and advertisers like Procter and Gamble and General Motors engage these agencies to buy and place their television commercials.

Depending upon the structure of the individual agency, it is the buyer's job to get the best air time for the lowest possible price. "Best" does not always mean highest-rated.

Media planners use market-by-market rating reports from Nielsen and/or Arbitron. These reports are 100 to 200 pages long and describe the ratings for every program in that market over a certain length of time. Typically, these are the statistics gathered during the "sweeps"—those weeks during which the networks air their very best programs. Market reports also provide such information as the average ratings of continuing shows along with their demographics; geographical information such as which counties compose the market's area is also included.

J. Walter Thompson, one of the

five largest advertising agencies in the country, has a system employing both media planners and buyers. Mr. Gabe Samuels, vice president of domestic media resources and research, describes their interaction:

"We systematically go through every market in the country and come up with a list—it could be 30, 50, perhaps up to 100 markets that we want to buy some spots in. Then we marry that information with the historical data which relates to average cost for each spot in each market. The media planner fills in a requisition form which has the limits of the budget, the length of time the campaign is to run, and the all-important demographics. The buyer will take that sheet and execute it by contacting a station or a station representative ("rep") and requesting an air time availability based on that given budget. Which shows to purchase is in the domain of the buyer."

When a television station rep and a broadcast buyer confront one another, the numbers play a crucial role. They help determine on what shows the buyer will purchase time and how many commercials will be placed on that station. Ingrida Kalnins, media director of GAM Chicago, describes what takes place during a television buy: "Basically, it's the rating more than anything else. If you have so many dollars to spend, then you know you can get approximately so many ratings points. After that, what it all comes down to is just haggling with the rep over costs.

"Television is a lot of wheeling-and-dealing—you play games back and forth. You try to get the rep to come down in price: 'CBS will give me X amount of rating for this dollar amount, and you are only coming in with this and that's not good enough.'

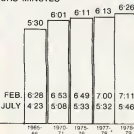
"The amount you can wheel-and-deal down all depends on the leverage you have," Kalnins continues. "If you are a big-time account and they know there is going to be guaranteed money coming out of you, then they will come in with a better deal. But if it's a one-time campaign they don't care. They figure there aren't too many other places in town to go."

Patt Cullinan of Chicago's Eisaman, Johns and Law advertising agency has direct responsibility for television buying decisions in her role as a media buyer. According to her, "You can cut TV reps down by as much as 25%."

J. Walter Thompson's Gabe Samuels goes further: "Setting a price on commercials is really supply and demand. It is a very, very confined business. The supply is always the same. A television station can only sell (depending on whether it is network-affiliated or independent) 12 to 16 minutes of commercial time per hour through the daytime and only nine-and-one-half to 12 minutes in prime time, and that's that. There are very few who go beyond that."

"If nobody is buying they will eventually have to put in some public service messages, so they would rather sell for any price. There are

AVERAGE HOURS OF HOUSEHOLD TV USAGE PER DAY HOURS: MINUTES



NIelsen ESTIMATES BASED ON TOTAL U.S. TV HOUSEHOLDS
SEPT.-AUG. AVERAGE, EXCLUDING UNUSUAL DAYS

How much television does your family watch? The average is now 6½ hours per day per household, up from 5½ hours per day 14 years ago.

©A.C. Nielsen 1980

published rate cards but nobody sticks by them. Cost fluctuates tremendously; two different advertisers at the same time at the same station may be paying two completely different rates. One of them may have bought the time a year ago, at which time the price was much more expensive. The other may have bought the spot two hours before broadcast, and they had to get rid of it so they sold it for \$200. The Nielsen and Arbitron ratings are the Bible to buyers. They cannot move without it."

Numbers are more to broadcast buyers than just tools to use in haggling with station reps. They are the only way a buyer and the agency have of justifying to an advertiser what they have bought with his money. Explains Cullinan, "There has to be something that you show to the client. The client is not going to say, 'Hey, I understand your gut feelings.' You have to show him in numbers a written estimate." GAM's Kalinins agrees. "Numbers legitimize your gut instincts and give them credibility."

"A show does not have to have high ratings in order to be successful," claims Samuels. "That does not really matter very much. If you have a show that has a rating of five and it sells for \$500 a spot or a rating of 20 and sells for \$2,000, it is all the same to us. The cost per rating point is the thing. We look at the ratings so we know how much we should be paying. A show can have very low ratings and be very successful if it is priced right."

"The higher-rated spots will cost more on a proportional basis. A 20 rated spot might not cost that hypothetical \$2,000, it would cost \$3,000. The stations will charge you a premium for the successful shows."

Ratings and the Broadcasters

The local stations and the networks use ratings for two main purposes. First, they set the price of their air time by what sort of ratings and shares their programming pulls. Second, and more apparent to the viewer, the ratings are used to make programming decisions.

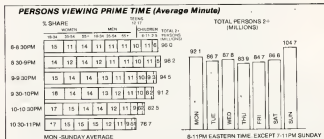
Third-place NBC echoes Gabe Samuels' view on spot prices.

"Efficiency-wise, it is true that a low-rated show is often better for an advertiser than a high-rated show because of the premium," affirms an NBC programming vice president. "People want to be in M*A*S*H, and because more people want to be in

M*A*S*H, CBS can charge a lot more for this show on a cost-per-rating-point basis. The advertiser will get a better deal on something that is almost doomed to get a very low rating. The network makes a lot less money on that show, so the net-

most visibly.

"The Nielsen numbers influence very heavily whether to cancel or keep an entertainment show," verifies an NBC executive. "And yet that does not necessarily mean a low-rated show will be cancelled, and a



A basic example of the type of prime-time viewing information Nielsen supplies to its clients. Both diary and meter results combine to provide these 1979 nation-wide statistics. Upon such statistics as these are advertising and programming decisions based.

work's thrust is constantly to try and weed out those lower-rated, lower-cost, lower-profit shows."

That is the essence of the "ratings scramble," it is a matter of delivering more of the kind of people advertisers want to reach per minute compared to the competition. In this way air time becomes more valuable because it can be sold for a higher price.

"The kind of people advertisers want to reach" is a key phrase. There are, in fact, viewers whom many advertisers do not want to reach. According to a director of research at WBBM-TV (CBS) in Chicago, the most blatant example would be the fear each network has of pulling an "old" (55 years and over) audience during prime time Monday through Friday. Prime time is the evening hours when television networks sell what to most advertisers is the prime audience for their products—people between 18 and 54 years of age, the majority of whom work and have money to spend. Advertisers believe the older audience has already bought most of the cars, furniture and soap that it will need. This audience is also less likely to be induced to change brands. Pulling a 55 and older audience during prime time, even if such audience is impressively large, can be cause for cancellation if a network finds few advertisers are buying spots in that program.

And so we come to that dreaded word "cancellation," the word which many viewers associate most closely with ratings. It is in programming decisions where ratings are employed

higher-rated show will not be. If a show that is expected to perform very well does not, that show could be cancelled even though it has a higher rating than a show in a tougher competitive situation. We're going to be very patient with a show that gets us a decent number going against hits like *Dukes of Hazzard* or *Dallas*."

Networks are notorious for their reliance on the ratings at the beginning of a new season. Many a viewer has agonized over the cancellation of a favorite show after only a few weeks of programming. One NBC source explains the process behind the scenes.

"We have all seen shows come on the air with 40 shares, then week two it's a 30 and week three it's a 25. At that point you know that show is gone. You do not need another number. But sometimes it's not all that clear-cut. It takes anywhere from three to six weeks to decide if a show should be cancelled.

"Nobody ever really cancelled a show after one week—it has happened one or two times. It is our judgment as to what a show should do going into a situation, and we have some pretty realistic ways of determining that. We have track records and histories. We look at what the lead-in show is. There is no formula."

"Of course sometimes when a show gets low ratings, you can say dammit, this is really a good show and I know it is not going anywhere. But competition is tough and we are

PRESIDENTIAL CONVENTIONS AND ELECTION NIGHT VIEWED BY MOST HOUSEHOLDS

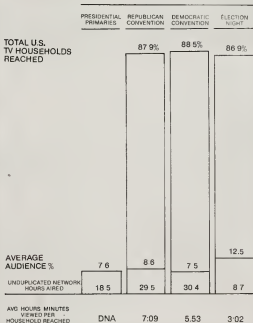
Since 1980 is a Presidential election year, we have reviewed the television audiences for major political events during 1976.

Over 85% of U.S. TV households viewed the 1976 political

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POLITICAL TELECASTING

1976



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going to stay with this because it is good."

Since that stance tends to be the exception rather than the rule, Video Action asked an NBC programmer how he would explain to a heartbroken fan why a favorite show was cancelled.

"All new programs replace shows that have failed; therefore, they go into tough time periods. And because of that the failure rate of new shows is very high. Let's say that ABC put *Three's Company* against CBS's *M*A*S*H* against our *Diff'rent Strokes*—those are all *hit* shows but in that situation at least one of them would be a failure. On the other hand, if you took three of the worst half hours you can name on each network and put them against each other one of them would be a hit.

"Television: viewing is very subjective, as is television programming. You loved this show, but most people did not. It was not watched enough for us to be able to keep it on for the majority of the viewers, which is what we have to keep in mind. It's your very favorite show and we took it off—there weren't enough of you around."

Ratings themselves are not the only factor to be considered in scheduling or canceling a particular show. Jack Jacobson, general manager of Chicago's non-network affiliated WGN-TV, describes some other reasons: "Ratings are a major basis of consideration for changes in programming, but not the sole basis. We find out about our programming from phone calls, letters, advertising agency input... the ratings services are used as a base from which we work."

— "It's All We've Got" —

Many people, both broadcasting industry professionals and viewers, have an almost paranoid suspicion of the ratings' accuracy. Hardly anyone in the broadcasting industry is comfortable with accepting the ratings completely on their own merits.

Stations, especially when the ratings are low, tend to wonder whether they are getting correct readings. Jacobson confides, "Until a better system is devised, we have nothing else to go by. Many times I cannot believe that more people are not watching, simply because of correspondence and word of mouth. But then again I have no proof. When everyone I meet or all the letters that come in talk about something, I wonder where all those people were and who was being metered!"

Perhaps Jacobson would do well to digest a bit of Ingrida Kalnins' philosophical viewpoint: "I believe in the numbers as much as I can in any scientific estimate. I think the key is that you have to remember they are estimates. They serve a function but they definitely are not the ultimate answer."

"I do not believe the numbers are an accurate measure of viewership," states J. Walter Thompson's Samuels. "I do not believe in them as an absolute. But the absolutes do not really matter. Relatively, I do believe in the numbers."

"Ratings numbers are likely to be somewhat inflated. To what extent I really don't know—if I did I would start a competing service. I do not mean it is all totally wrong, but very marginal viewing may be recorded where it really should not be. If somebody is only in the room and they vaguely remember seeing a program, are they as good a viewer as somebody who actually sat there and watched the thing from beginning to end?"

Samuels has another theory which explains why he believes in overestimation of viewership. "Nielsen and Arbitron rely on samples to give them information. Depending on the type of service, the cooperation rate can go as low as 50% of those initially approached. Now I submit to you that those people who do cooperate are a little bit more interested in television, a little bit more likely to watch more than those who do not."

Samuels continues on a more positive note. "On the other hand, ratings do reflect pretty accurately the relative standing of programs. If one show has a 20 rating and another has a 10, I would be willing to bet a good deal of money that twice as many people saw the first one as the second. All that matters is the relationship of that particular show to other shows. So we know if a show gets a 20 it is worth twice as much as a show that gets a ten."

The people in NBC's programming department are positive about ratings and find they mirror, for the most part, expected viewer reaction. Claims one source, "I have no reason to disbelieve what Nielsen tells us about what people watch. It seems that in my long experience watching television shows, what I think America would watch and what Nielsen says it watches match most of the time. That does not mean I have to make my decisions based on what Nielsen says, but I believe what Nielsen says."



© A.C. Nielsen, Inc.

The Storage Instantaneous Audiometer feeds all channel selection and viewing information back to Nielsen's Florida computer center twice daily via telephone lines. This is the device responsible for the "overnight" ratings.

"If I could change the way programming decisions are made, I would continue to use Nielsen figures to the hilt. It is the only thing I have got that tells me what the reactions of the people are. It is invaluable information."

"My research people tell me that the research Nielsen does is fairly good, and gives a very good indication of what people are actually viewing."

One final view from an NBC programmer: "Ratings are not an evil thing, they are a necessary part of conducting our business, much like any other business that charges admission or needs to know what is popular. We are not against ratings per se; we do not use ratings as a be-all and end-all."

Ratings and the New Technologies

The advent of cable television, satellites and videocassettes will without a doubt make for a whole new ball game in the ratings field, drastically altering the share of audience each station gets. Non-affiliated stations like WGN-TV in Chicago (which is already being carried on a great many cable systems around the country) hope to see their audience numbers shoot upwards on the electronic wings of cables and satellites.

"I do not believe in the ratings as an absolute, but the absolutes do not really matter."

The ratings services, however, are only now formulating techniques to ascertain who the cable and videocassette audience is and what they are watching. Laments general manager Jacobson, "We are not selling cable at this point. That is a potential, but nobody can tell anything definite until the ratings systems and services begin to show more accurately where that audience is and who is watching. It will take two or three years."

"The figures I see in cable magazines show a minimum of four million homes more above and beyond the Chicago area (watching WGN-TV), but there is no way of really proving it. We might be carried by a cable system but we do not know if the people in that cable system are watching us or not."

Do the new technologies scare the networks? At this point, they seem to be taking the cautious view.

"For the long range," admits one source at NBC, "we are keeping our eyes on cable, satellite and videocassettes. Eventually, it is going to spread the viewing out to different times of the day. The viewer is going to have an option as to when he watches what, so it is going to raise viewing levels overall. The networks probably will stay pretty much the same—maybe viewing will be a little fractionalized and we will lose audience in terms of share—but as the population grows we will probably stay the same for the next few years."

PRIMA FACIE

A FIRST VIEW OF WHAT'S NEW

VIDEO TAPES

ALL THAT JAZZ. A 20th Century Fox Release; videocassette from Magnetic Video Corporation. Produced by Robert Alan Aurthur. Directed by Bob Fosse. Executive producer, Daniel Melnick; Screenplay, Aurthur, Fosse; camera (Technicolor), Giuseppe Rotunno; editor, Alan Heim; choreography, Fosse; production design, Phillip Rosenberg, Tony Walton; costume design Albert Wolsky; music Ralph Burns; sound, Chris Newman, Peter Ilardi; assistant director, Wolfgang Glattes. MPAA Rating: R. Running time: 123 minutes. \$69.95 retail.

Cast

Joe Gideon Roy Scheider
Angelique Jessica Lange
Kate Jagger Ann Reinking
Audrey Paris Leland Palmer
Davis Newman Cliff Gorman
O'Connor Flood Ben Vereen
Michelle Erzebeil Foldi

Other than the fact that *All That Jazz* is the first videocassette to be released gold (one million dollars in retail advance sales) this review would probably not appear. After all, practically everyone has seen it . . . why be redundant after all these months?

Why indeed.

The fact of the matter is that *All That Jazz* translates very well onto the television screen, that smaller-than-life, smaller-than-70mm, considerably-less-than-Dolby-sound entity sitting in the living room.

Obviously, a good number of Hollywood super-productions survive the filtering down from the big screen to the tube without losing too many iota of wonderment . . . not to mention the incursion of commercial interruptions. *The Wizard of Oz*, *Gone With The Wind*, *Ben-Hur*, and *The Godfather* come to mind. Buzby Berkeley holds up fairly well, too.

There are parts of *All That Jazz* that, sitting in a theater, you wouldn't think could possibly work on a television screen.

But Fosse's semiautobiographical mortality play—with its lush avant-garde sets and choreography and all-too-obvious-hammer-on-the-head theme—comes across on the tube with a bit more subtlety than it did on

lives only in his mind.

What weaves the movie together is Gideon's lush dream life which peppers the movie, presented in the form of explanatory vignettes of his life set to song and dance, presided over by



the large curved screen. It is a bit less overwhelming on television and allows for more visual objectivity.

The film's "plot" is actually a drawn-out personality sketch of Joe Gideon, focusing on the closing days of his career as an obsessed workaholic/perfectionist director and choreographer. Gideon lives on amphetamines, aesthetics, cigarettes, eye drops and sex.

This film could well have been a grade-B tearjerker. What truly makes *All That Jazz* enjoyable is the credibility of its actors, particularly when they are in hard-to-believe situations. Of course, the visual feast provided by Fosse's choreography and Giuseppe Rotunno's camerawork would have made the film exciting even if the acting were below par.

One knows from the beginning that Gideon is a man doomed. Obsessively juggling a workload as a director/choreographer of Broadway musicals and director/editor of a movie, Gideon also juggles—though not as successfully—his relations with the women in his life. There is his ex-wife Audrey, his girlfriend Kate who tries to understand him, his daughter Michelle who wants as much of his time as possible, and his true love, Angelique, who

the mysterious Angelique.

It dawns on the more astute in the audience very early in the movie that Angelique is Gideon's Angel of Death, a beautifully seductive woman, tempting him throughout his dreams which become progressively more complex and stunning as the movie draws to its inevitable climax.

All That Jazz, of course, exists for the dance sequences and not for the thin story line. The dancing is dominated by Ben Vereen as the energetic and cynical O'Connor Flood, a character who is the ringmaster conducting Gideon's final performance. O'Connor Flood is the only character in the film Gideon cannot control.

It is in the dance numbers where the translation of the film to videocassette is most interesting and effective. In the theater the largeness of the dance movements and the stunning gaudiness of the sets blind the audience, somewhat, to the intricacies of the action, which becomes more comprehensible on the television screen.

Seeing *All That Jazz* on the tube has cured me of a recurring anxiety that many of the best films (well, many of my favorites at least) simply would not come across through the

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that are as lengthy as *Swept Away* By *An Unusual Destiny In The Blue Sea* Of August.

Perhaps the Video Organizer does have some limited use, but for myself, I think I will stick with my trusty adhesive labels and typewriter and put the six bucks towards a new blank tape.

—Alex Josephs

BOOKS

M*A*S*H: THE EXCLUSIVE, INSIDE STORY OF T.V.'S MOST POPULAR SHOW, by David S. Reiss. Forward by Alan Alda. 158 pages. Published by Bobbs-Merrill Co. \$8.95.

In nine seasons of prime-time success—and two years of top-rated syndicated reruns—M*A*S*H has managed to capture a large and loyal audience, numerous awards for dramatic excellence and scads of respect from critics and viewers. After all, here is a program that enthalls without a single jiggle while it plays to—rather than insults—our intelligence.

I am a true blue, dyed-in-the-wool hardcore M*A*S*H fanatic. I was captivated by Richard Hooker's fine novel, enchanted by Robert Altman's excellent screen adaptation and even the ninth rerun of any given episode of the television show does little to diminish my enthusiasm.

So news of a book on M*A*S*H, especially news of a book such as David S. Reiss' M*A*S*H: *The Exclusive, Inside Story of T.V.'s Most Popular Show*, was greeted with much enthusiasm and high expectations. Word had it that Reiss' book would not only delve into the backstage background of the program and its stars, but would provide us M*A*S*H freaks with a complete listing of the cast and plots of the first 193 episodes as well. With the shows being run out of order in syndication these days, such a listing would be invaluable. What a bonanza. What a book.

What a disappointment.

M*A*S*H is 158 pages of words and pictures but very little information. We all know that Alan Alda is a bright, creative man with a deep concern for the issues of the day. We know that Larry Linville is, in reality, nothing like the Frank Burns character he portrayed. We know Jamie Farr does not wear dresses around the house. What we do not know is anything about these people that does not appear in their official studio biographies.

In fact, that is what struck me most about this book as I went through the profiles of Alda, Linville, et al. M*A*S*H reads like a studio press release on the stars. And one need go no further than the copyright page at the front of the book to discover why this is so—

M*A*S*H was commissioned for and is owned by Twentieth Century-Fox, the studio that produces the television program. It is, in essence, one big, profit-making hype for the company.

It is not that I have an overwhelming desire to read that Alan Alda kicks little puppies around the set or that Harry Morgan does strange things with chip-dip. On the contrary, I like the characters on M*A*S*H and want to like the people that play them as well. But Reiss does profiles on 14 of the program's cast and creators and every single one of them come off sounding like candidates for sainthood. Of course, there certainly is no reason why they cannot all be truly nice folks, but they cannot all be perfect either! fact, either!

In fact, Reiss' obvious hero worship of the show and the people in it severely limits the book's credibility. Sure, the backstage anecdotes are interesting and often amusing, but we

Obvious hero worship severely limit's M*A*S*H's credibility.

are left with the feeling that nothing of substance has been imparted.

Still, all the pap could be forgiven—at least by me—for a good episode index. Sadly, that too is missing. While all the episodes are listed by seasons, with the names of all the guest-stars, writers and directors, the shows are not listed in the order they were originally telecast, and none of the guest-stars are credited with the characters they portrayed.

But worst of all are the program descriptions. As every dedicated M*A*S*Hophile knows, there is no such thing as a one level M*A*S*H plot. Most episodes feature at least two, and often three or four stories woven together. Thus a description such as "After three days of near-continuous duty, Hawkeye's behavior becomes wackier than usual," does not tell us much since there have been several episodes with that premise.

At least the photographs in M*A*S*H—though all in black and white—are nice. They show some of the program's zanier moments as well as candid shots snapped behind the camera and during breaks. Baby photographs of each person profiled are sappy but cute.

Alas, M*A*S*H the book is quite a disappointment. One can only hope that somebody will come along soon and write the book this one should have been. Anything less than a top quality history of one of television's finest programs is bound to be a failure.

—Paul Kupperberg

JOHNNY TONIGHT!, by Craig Tennis. 224 pages. Published by Pocket Books. \$2.50.

Did you know:

That the tapping of the ubiquitous pencil is usually Johnny Carson's way of showing either hostility or boredom?

That once Johnny takes a dislike to a Tonight Show guest it is unlikely that you will ever see that person seated on the familiar couch again?

That Johnny is extremely competitive and hates to lose—especially in a battle of wits?

Most of this undoubtedly comes as a surprise to regular viewers of Johnny Carson's Tonight Show. We feel that after 18 years of his coming into our homes night after night we know Johnny to be a warm human being, full of good cheer for employee and guest alike.

Craig Tennis is here to tell us we are wrong.

Johnny Tonight! is a behind-the-scenes look at *The Tonight Show*, its star and staff. Craig Tennis, unlike Robert Metz with his recent book on NBC's long-running late-night hit, did not have to worry about receiving official cooperation from *The Tonight Show* staff—he used to be on *The Tonight Show* staff. For eight years Tennis functioned as one of the program's talent coordinators, those people who find, pre-interview and babysit the show's guests.

So Johnny Tonight! is, as you might imagine, a book chock full of backstage anecdotes, most of them good natured and fun loving. But not all of them.

It is obvious that Tennis likes and respects Carson—he left the show on his own to move up to a producer's



job elsewhere after a glowing on-the-air farewell from Johnny. There are a good number of stories about Tonight's famous host, although many are far from flattering. Yet even when Tennis tells a tale that shows Carson to be cold and distant—even cruel and often

near paranoic—le somehow manages to excuse the Prince for his behavior. Carson is, after all, the star and any antisocial acts are perfectly all right.

Through it all, we never really get to know Carson. That is no doubt because Tennis does not know the man, even after eight years on his staff. Johnny Carson is probably the most private man on television, shunning interviews except on the rarest occasions. We seldom read about him in the tabloids and his name is conspicuously absent from the gossip columns. Tennis' book just shows that his desire for privacy extends into the television studio as well.

Much more interesting are the profiles and shenanigans of the Tonight staff. There is a lot of insanity and craziness going on behind the curtain and Tennis allows us to peek backstage for mostly amusing and sometimes touching glimpses. The best parts come in the vignettes of the show's writers: an entirely odd cast of characters, especially writer-performer Pat McCormack with his penchant for dropping his pants to get a laugh—even at his mother's funeral.

Still, underlying all the fun and games is a feeling of tension. The story always comes back to Carson, and life with him can be precarious. Writers are signed to 13 to 26 week contracts and many do not find out they are not to be renewed until they come in one morning and find they no longer have a parking space. Some last for a long time, but even they operate under a quasi-sadistic strain generated by the Tonight host.

The natural urge in reading such books is to glean some new knowledge about Carson, but don't count on it. Johnny is not about to let anyone get close enough to uncover anything new. Still, Craig Tennes' Johnny Tonight! does provide interesting and funny stories about the rest of the Tonight Show staff and crew and, considering the limitations of his subject matter, that will have to do for now.

—Howard Kaye

X-RATED

TALK DIRTY TO ME (1980), Produced by Jerry Ross and Directed by Anthony Spinelli. 80 minutes. Distributed by Caballero Control Corporation. \$89.50 retail

CAST

Marlene Jessie St. James
Jack John Leslie
Helen Juliet Anderson
Lenny Richard Pacheco
Doctor Chris Cassidy
Jill Dorothy LeMay

I've seen a good deal of porno in my day—in theaters, peep shows, on cassette and live. With this in mind, I have to say that *Talk Dirty To Me* is



one of the most delightful X-rated flicks I've seen since the (in)famous *Devil in Miss Jones*.

From the quality of photography to dialogue to acting, not to mention the honest quality of the hot sex itself, my attention was riveted to the television screen... which is a lot to say about a skinklick these days.

Talk Dirty To Me opens with some very pretty shots of California beachfronts and hang gliders as we are introduced to Jack and Lenny, two likable guys with no visible means of support who are looking for women.

The only problem is Lenny, a likable schlep who has the unfortunate tendency to turn ladies off with his uncouth behavior and personal hygiene. Jack, on the other hand, is smooth and competent.

Poor Lenny is rendered crippled when his inimicable way with women results in a very unloving tumble which screws up his ankle. Jack takes Lenny to the doctor... a stunning creature who Jack proceeds to seduce while Lenny is in the examination room.

Jack's tactic of seduction is the movie's theme... talking dirty.

Whereas this is not the first sex movie to employ this device, it is the first I've seen where it works well. It is not the forced or overdubbed coprolalia like so many others where this type of dialogue turns out to be just another goofy affectation. In *Talk Dirty* the dirty talk has a sincere erotic quality that enhances the intensely sincere sex... beginning with the scenes of Jack and the doctor.

The doctor is Jack's first of several sexual contacts throughout the film. After this scene, the doctor exits the movie—which is too bad as I would

like to have seen a bit more of her.

Of course, the rest of the cast of *Talk Dirty* are equally good looking and proficient, particularly the wealthy and lonely Marlene who Jack spots on the beach through a pair of binoculars.

Jack and Lenny find out where she lives, which is a large home conveniently located next to an empty house up for sale. The two randy characters move in temporarily and Jack begins to get closer to Marlene by doing odd jobs around her place.

It is obvious that Marlene is frustrated and lonely. She is married to a businessman who travels frequently and will not indulge her erotic whims while he's home. Fortunately for everyone, the husband's away.

Jack eventually gets Marlene to bed after a series of ploys on his part involving some stimulating phone conversations and some sex play which Marlene observes between Jack and one of his pretty friends.

This highly charged erotic atmosphere only serves to make Marlene progressively more frustrated until the the movie finally explodes in an incredible sex-scene.

I have only two quibbles with *Talk Dirty*. First, the musical score sometimes borders on muzak where a heavy rock beat would have been more appropriate. The second is not so much the fault of the movie but of sexlicks in general: why must the audience always have to see the man ejaculate? This onanism is quite a strange thing in the X-rated field and it tends to make even the best pictures lose a good deal of their believable quality. In this, *Talk Dirty To Me* is no exception.

But when the people in *Talk Dirty* get it on, they project an intense fun-loving image—they really seem to be having a good time. Nothing is forced, and no one appears to be bored. Unlike so much of the adult fare around where the acting is stiff—and sometimes about the only thing stiff—and the dialogue incompetent, *Talk Dirty To Me* is fun to watch. It is visually exciting, sometimes clever and funny, and because of these qualities, it is at the top of its genre.

—T.B. Martin

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See Page 71 for more information.

VINTAGE VIDEO

Not only do cult programs have fans who watch each episode despite countless reruns, they have spawned fan clubs that publish newsletters and magazines.

OVERVIEW by Larry Charet

WOULD YOU LIKE TO BECOME a card-carrying member of a television cult?

You have probably read or heard about "cult" movies such as *Rocky Horror Picture Show* and *Night of the Living Dead*. These are films that have played to packed houses at midnight showings and at college campuses, oftentimes running for years at the same location. In many cases, the audience consists of the same people who wish to view their favorite film over and over again. When it comes to that type of attention and dedication—the energy that goes into the "cult" phenomenon—television shows are no different.

Three "cult" shows that I will examine here at this time (there are others to be discussed later) are all British imports: *The Avengers*, *The Prisoner* and *Doctor Who*. Not only do these programs have fans who watch each episode despite countless and continuing reruns, they have spawned fan clubs that publish newsletters and magazines (called "fanzines" in the field). These sundry publications relate the latest gossip about the shows and the actors and actresses who have played in them.

Patrick MacNee, who portrays the debonair secret agent John Steed on *The Avengers*, is the focal point of the *Avengers/Patrick MacNee Fan Network*. Members receive six 32 page newsletters per year with information on MacNee's activities as well as the whereabouts of other people who have been associated with this long-running series.

Chairperson Heather Firth also offers an excellent service of photocopying *Avengers* newspaper and magazine articles—including, no doubt, this one. The most recent newsletters (#15 and #16) contain a reference guide complete with episode listings from the Honor Blackman days through the "current" New *Avengers* series. Goldfinger star Blackman played Steed's female companion in the pre-Emma Peel days.

The subject of the *Doctor Who*

Appreciation Society (DWAS) might not be familiar to all Video Action readers. For seventeen years—so far—*Doctor Who* has been travelling through time and space over Britain's respected BBC network. For the past five years, various episodes of The Doctor's adventures have made it to our shores via syndication through Time-Life Video. It was not until 1978, when the current Doctor (four actors have portrayed him on television), played by Tom Baker, made his domestic appearance. The Baker episodes helped the series gain wide acceptance and led to the cult following.

Because the series is in syndication, some areas of the country have never

seen the program. Even so, there are countless *Who* fans and there was a *Doctor Who* convention last year.

The cult started in England, as one might expect, and the DWAS started there in the mid-1970s. After being swamped by American members the past several years, it was necessary to start a North American branch: NADWAS, as it is called. Members get a monthly newsletter, a bi-monthly magazine and offers for episode synopses, fan fiction and so on. These publications are printed in England and shipped to California for distribution here.

Our final cult classic is *The Prisoner*. This series has the distinction of having an enormous following despite a mere 17 episodes to its credit. The show proved popular enough in its initial CBS run in 1968—it was rerun on the same network the following year—to make rounds in syndication. In 1977, various Public Broadcast Stations picked up the program and exposed this enigmatic series to an entire new legion of fans.

There are a number of fan groups devoted to Patrick McGoochan and his character, Number Six. David Taesch's *Prisoner Newsletter* is probably the best of the lot. Included in each issue is the latest information on McGoochan's current film projects, as well as letters of discussion on both *The Prisoner* and McGoochan's earlier spy-themed series, *Secret Agent* (a.k.a. *Danger Man*). Most issues are very interesting, particularly when you realize *The Prisoner* ceased production 13 years ago and there never will be any new episodes.

If you are an admirer of any or all of these series, there is no longer any reason to suspect you have peculiar tastes. All these fan clubs (if you will) are highly recommended—now you know there are others like you.

If you run or belong to a fan club concerned with a television series (other than *Star Trek*, whose following is certainly more than a mere cult), write me here at Video Action and I will be happy to include the



Patrick McGoochan runs for office in the "Free for All" episode of *THE PRISONER*.

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information in a future Vintage Video Action column.

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And now to this month's Vintage Video questions.

Q. How can you get shows like *Maverick* and *Dobie Gillis* on tape when you do not have VCR-owning relatives or friends in other cities? Linda Ross, Astoria, N.Y.

A. The best method to obtain hard-to-get shows is to place a mini-ad in the video collector's fanzine, *The Videophile* (an excellent publication; *Video Action* will be reviewing this magazine in the next issue). As this magazine is not available on most newsstands, you can subscribe for \$14.00 for six issues. *The Videophile*, 2003 Apalachee Parkway, Tallahassee, Florida 32301.

For your information *Maverick* is being carried by superstation WTBS (channel 17) at various times, so a great many cable subscribers all over the nation have access to it. By the way, NBC announced James Garner is returning to *Maverick* next season.

Dobie Gillis is a bit harder. I know it's on Channel 3 in Madison, Wisconsin and Channel 45 in Winston-Salem, North Carolina—any readers who know of other outlets for *Dobie*, please drop me a line.

Q. The CBS Late Movie is no longer showing the Diana Rigg episodes of *The Avengers*; they never showed the black-and-white episodes. Where can I get them? Jeff Sampson, Holyoke, MA

A. Writing CBS would be the best place to start. Tell them you would like to see all the Diana Rigg episodes, including the 26 black-and-whites.

All 83 Diana Rigg and Linda Thorsen hours were in syndication until last winter when CBS began showing the 25 Rigg color adventures. At the time, they purchased rights to all *The Avengers* shows: Even though these programs are not being shown on CBS, they are not yet available in the syndication market.

These *Avengers* episodes include the five ABC did not air in 1966—the most famous being "Honey For The Prince," which prominently displayed Ms. Rigg's navel. Look, things were tough back in 1966.

The Honor Blackman episodes were never shown in this country.

Q. Was there actually a Doctor Who serial that featured all the different actors that portrayed The Doctor? Terry Dicks, Gallifrey, Alaska.

A. Believe it or not, "The Three Doctors" episode does exist. To kick off the 1972-1973 season, the BBC decided to develop a story in which The Doctor meets his former selves. Jon Pertwee played the Doctor at that time—he was joined by previous incarnations Patrick Troughton and William Hartnell, who were brought to the present by the Time-Lords to quell a galactic disturbance of the highest order. Unfortunately, this great serial was never distributed in the United States. Tom Baker, the fourth and current Doctor Who, retires at the end of the 1980-81 season after seven years in the role.

TV Obscura

Continuing our list of syndicated shows showing up in a limited number of markets:

Naked City: Channel 5, Toronto

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